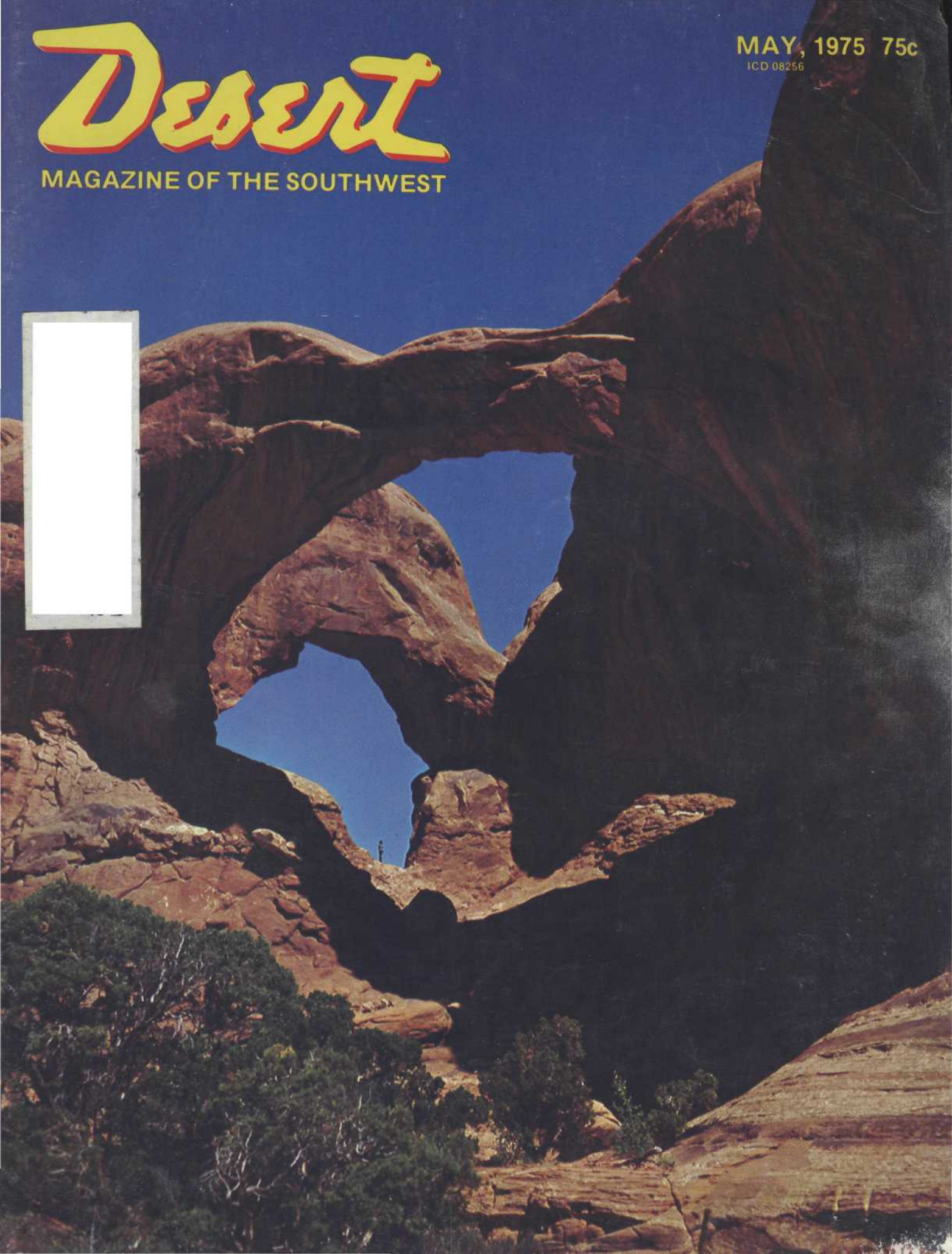


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Volume 38, Number 5

MAY 1975

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THE COVER:

A double arch in The Windows section of Arches National Park in Southeastern Utah. Photo by James Blank, Chula Vista, California.

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A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

ON THE evening of April 4th, in a setting of starlight and campfire smoke, were gathered a fine group of Peglegophiles to commemorate Harry Oliver's birthday. Harry was that great desert press agent who was responsible for the original Pegleg Mine Trek and Liar's Contest back in the 1940's, as foretold in our March issue by Diana Lindsay.

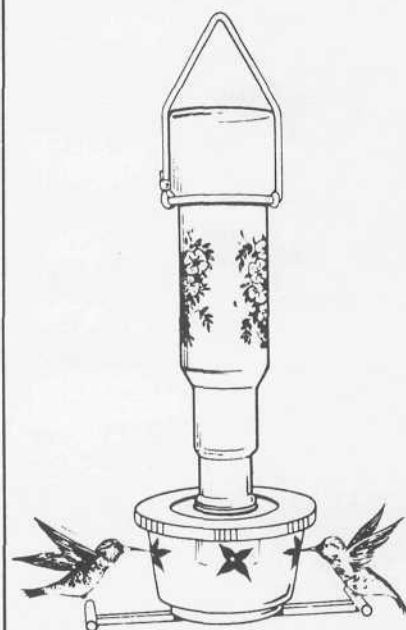
This was the prelude to a weekend of fun in California's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park where the Pegleg Monument was the center of all activities. A guided Nature Walk and a four-wheel-drive tour of the Borrego Badlands were followed by the main event, The Liar's Contest, where outrageous tales of personal experiences kept everyone in fits of laughter.

Several hundred people braved a chilly night to hear Ben Stirdivant, of Hemet, weave a tall tale of Indians and gold to place first; Sandy Eastman, of El Toro, was second as she told of a personal encounter with a man with a wooden leg and its bruising consequences; Escondido's Jim Huie recounted an exciting overnight experience in the Anza-Borrego Desert when a packrat substituted his crackers for gold nuggets which earned him third prize. Terry Brann and Warren Boynton, both of Borrego Springs, received honorable mention awards, and Phil Smith, of Imperial Beach, slipped away into the night and his booby prize is at the *Desert Magazine* office awaiting its right claimant.

It was a resounding success, so let's plan right now to all be together next year and see who's "The Biggest Liar of Them All."

William Kuyper

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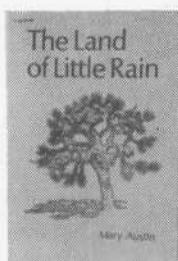
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THE LAND OF LITTLE RAIN

By Mary Austin

Ecologist, feminist and mystic before these terms became popular, Mary Austin knew the desert as few human beings have known it. *The Land of Little Rain*, first published in 1903, is an acknowledged classic of southwestern literature. It describes the plant, animal and human life of the border region of Southern California and Arizona, land of the yucca, the coyote, the buzzard, inhabited by miners, vaqueros, Shoshone and Paiute Indians.

Mary's family moved west in 1888, to homestead in the San Joaquin Valley, where Mary found a job teaching. Discouraging though the homestead effort was, she never lost her feeling for the desert with the "presence" she felt there, which she described as "brooding" and "aloof." It was a timeless and colorful world of roadrunner, burros and prospectors: Indian campoodies with their basket makers and medicine men; sheep pastures; stagecoach towns where faro dealing, cock fights, fiestas and church fairs were activities in the broad valleys and spacious hills.

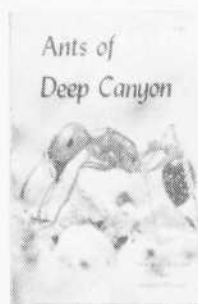
As early as 1903, when Mary Austin wrote the essays that became *The Land of Little Rain*, she had discovered the

charm and interest of old geological ridges, mesquite-covered ranges, and sky-reaching mesas, lands without human occupancy, but a part of nature's framework. Vast open spaces were neither silent nor barren for her. She recognized an exchange of communication everywhere, and her search was to understand and participate as fully as she could.

Mary Austin wrote about all this while she lived in the "brown house under the willow tree at the end of the village street." The village was Independence, California, where the visitor may find the house today.

Although she is best known for her writings about Southern California, Mary Austin was also a playwright, poet, essayist and novelist. She produced some 35 books and hundreds of shorter works during a 42-year career. In the early twentieth century she was instrumental in founding the Carmel colony of artists and writers and later lived in New York City and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Of her many works, only *The Land of Little Rain* has been repeatedly reissued.

Illustrated paperback. 171 pages. \$2.45



ANTS OF DEEP CANYON

By G.C. and Jeanette Wheeler

The ubiquitous ant has been the subject of intensive scientific research throughout the world and the environs of the Colorado Desert of southeastern California provide us with a delightful little handbook detailing the activities of 59 specific ant neighbors — families that live just up the alluvial fan of awesome Deep Canyon, site of the University of California's world-famed Philip L. Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Research Center.

Admittedly a scientific handbook, this little volume is written for the serious layman as well. Serious about ants and the teeming wildlife around you every-

where in the low desert. The authors are considered the nation's outstanding couple engaged in ant research. Their headquarters are in Reno at the University of Nevada's Desert Research Institute but on any given day you may find them far afield in the Great Basin or Sonoran Deserts. They spent more than three years researching and writing this book.

The Wheelers warn that many similar species among the 59 found in the Coachella Valley foothills will baffle ordinary efforts for identification. It takes an expert and a powerful microscope in some cases so the casual visitor needn't feel inadequate if the problem overwhelms.

The key to identification for the more common species may be found in color, size, nesting habits and, most painfully, as the Wheelers learned by personal experience, by their bite and/or sting.

Ants of the low desert play a vital role in the overall ecology of their home region. Some are seed harvesters; others cultivate living food containers; still others manufacture their food in much the same way the cheesemaker processes those delicious Old World varieties, with mold and bacterial action.

In short, ants live a rich, full, surprisingly diverse and varied existence, whether in the open desert or in the warmth and food-filled comforts of your house.

What the Wheelers learned will be of interest to any desert resident, of particular importance to the natural gardener, to the casual researcher of other wild plant and animal life.

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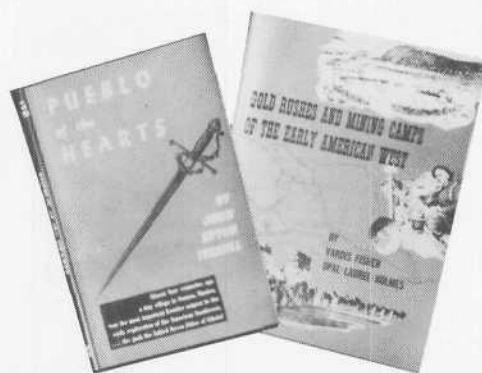
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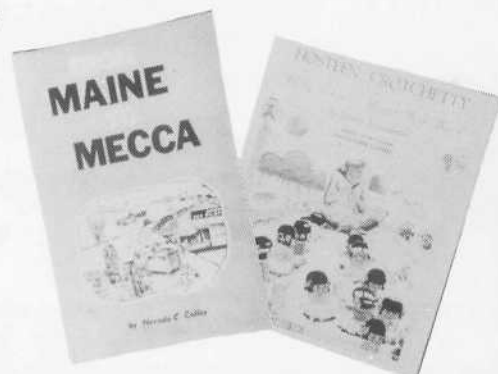
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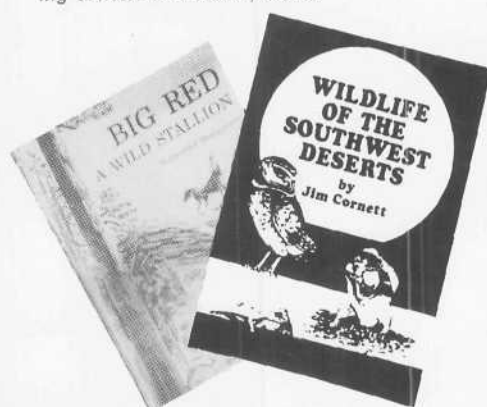
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WHEN YOU examine a map of Arizona, a small portion of the northwest corner of the state appears to have been squeezed out of its boundaries into Southern Nevada. This configuration is caused by a natural separation between the two states — the mighty Colorado River. It is at this point the great river makes an abrupt 90-degree turn and heads almost due south on the last leg of its long journey to the Gulf of California.

Known to explorers and prospectors since the early 1800's, this highly mineralized region has boasted its share of "strikes and boomtowns." Their tenure has been brief. Until recently, it has remained a rather inhospitable land with a very small, scattered population.

Today, the northwest corner of Arizona is coming into its own. Senior citizens have found the wide-open-spaces, warm climate and fresh air to their liking for retirement homes. Recreationists, looking for new country to explore, will find much to interest them along historical trails, or while visiting old mining districts and ghost towns such as White Hills.

Once the largest "town" in northwestern Arizona, the camp of White Hills lies at the base of a pass through the hills for which it was named. In 1894, its population had swelled to 1200. This was two years after rich silver ore had been located by Henry Shaffer of Gold Basin. However, Henry was not the original discoverer. The deposits had been known to the Indians and it was Hualpai Jeff who showed Henry ore from deposits he had discovered in 1887. He also guided Henry to the location. The latter promptly filed several claims before returning to Gold Basin to tell his friends about the new bonanza.

Hualpai Jeff probably came to rue the day he gave the secret away. Shaffer and two of his friends, John Burnett and John Sullivan, returned to the new strike. Additional locations were made and the three men began working their separate claims. The silver ore occurred in quartz veins traversing light-colored, gneissoid granite. It was this coloring that led to the name "White Hills." Mining was easy and the ore rich, averaging \$1000 per ton. News of the strike quickly spread to other camps and eager prospectors began arriving daily. Many fortunes were made from surface workings.

Ghosts of White Hills

by MARY FRANCES STRONG

Photos by Jerry Strong

Right: 40-stamps once reverberated the crumbling foundations of this mill site.

Lower right: Throughout the hills, ruins of stone cabins will be found.
Lower left: After 80 years of weathering, wood in the shaft-head is splintered and bleached. The ore-bucket cable still remains in place.

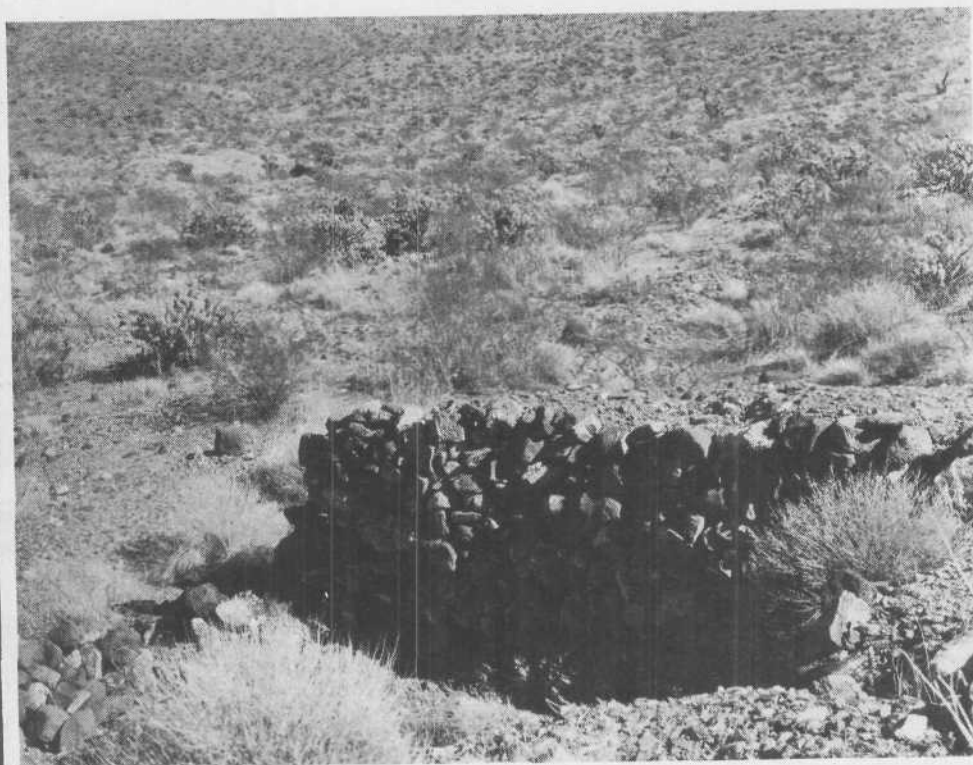


One man, R.T. Root, had visions of grandeur for the camp of White Hills. It would become the "mining capital" of the region. Quickly forming the White Hills Mining Company and appointing himself president, Root teamed up with D.H. Moffat of Colorado. This was an important merger, since Root would develop the district with capital supplied by Moffat. A 12-stamp mill was erected and the first, deep shafts sunk. Within two years, the White Hills Mining Company owned the camp!

The boom was on! As the population continued to swell, the camp was rapidly becoming a town. Freight wagons ar-

rived regularly with the necessities, as well as luxuries. All the mines were doing well with several reportedly earning from three to 12 million dollars for their owners. It was a time of prosperity and the townspeople enjoyed a life-style comparable to the "folks back east."

White Hills' destiny as a permanent town seemed even more assured when the White Hills Mining Company was sold to an English firm for a million and a half dollars. Money seemed no object to the new White Hills Mining and Milling Company which promptly built a 40-stamp mill. Next, an electric generating plant was installed to serve



both the town and the mines.

Fire was one of the great fears of mining towns. They were usually without adequate water and, once a fire started, it developed into a holocaust. The nearest source of water for White Hills was a spring seven miles east. A tremendous concrete reservoir was built a mile above the town. Then, a wooden pipeline was laid up and over the pass to the spring. Another pipeline delivered water throughout the townsite. Fire hydrants were strategically placed, which made White Hills one of the few camps to have such modern services.

Unfortunately, the spring could not

provide the large amounts of water needed; so water-wagons peddled the precious liquid on the streets. Booze was not in short supply and 12 saloons on Main Street did a brisk business.

White Hills also had many amenities dear to the hearts of the gentler sex. A fine schoolhouse and church graced the town. In addition, a laundry, general mercantile stores, ice wagons and numerous small businesses catered to the townfolks' every need.

Though the mines were doing well, the White Hills Mining and Milling Company was in trouble. It had spent a fortune developing both the town and the

mines. When the final property payment came due the company was unable to meet it. A sheriffs sale was held and the former owners, Root and Moffat, bought it back.

White Hills future still looked bright when the *Mohave County Miner* for February 6, 1897 stated it would be "the scene of the greatest excitement ever witnessed in a mining camp on the American continent." A year later, it was obvious the rich veins were playing out. People began to move away and by January 28, 1899, the *Mohave Miner* was attempting to strengthen morale by reports such as "Cabins are filling up again. School is running smoothly with full attendance. White Hills is a good place to come back to. You are welcome, returning prodigals."

Even Mother Nature took a slap at the little town whose bright future seemed assured. Again, the *Mohave Miner* gave the details. "Early on the morning of August 5th (1899) a cloudburst in the hills took the desert by surprise and poured water down the town's streets. A shanty in its path bade goodbye to the town and started for the valley, and by 9 o'clock the whole town was in danger. Water came tossing down like rapids above Niagara, the waves seeming to run four or five feet high.

"Luckily, the water took a path to one side of the business section. A cabin in which Mr. Shallenberger was sleeping was lifted and whirled end for end. After much floundering in the water he managed to pull ashore with his blankets. The foundation was washed away from under the eastside of the schoolhouse and it lies tilted toward the sunrise with mud piled inside.

"At the Grand Army Extension the men got out just as the water filled the shaft to the collar! At the African Mine, with water and rocks streaming down the shaft, the men were unable to climb the 200 feet of ladders until a trench turned the main sheet of water and the men escaped.

"Two feet of soil was deposited on the road surfaces and six horses were needed to pull one wagon through the silt." The account in the newspaper concludes, "We might call their affair too much of a good thing. For water sells at one dollar a barrel in White Hills . . . we had a million dollar bath!"

At the turn-of-the-century, the great boom was over. The Indian Secret Min-

ing District need not hang its head in shame. Over 12-million dollars in silver had been wrested from the rich veins. Silver ore still remains in the White Hills mines. Over the years there have been many attempts to mine it profitably. None have been very successful. It is the same old story — high operating costs and a low price for silver.

Our trip to White Hills found us driving south from Hoover Dam on a narrow ribbon of asphalt marked Highway 93. We passed through a series of hills, then entered Detrital Valley — an arid, creosote-covered basin of considerable size. It was a lonely road, void of traffic and settlements. White Hills is shown on most Arizona road maps and we didn't anticipate any problem in finding it. However, we were unprepared for just how well it would be marked.

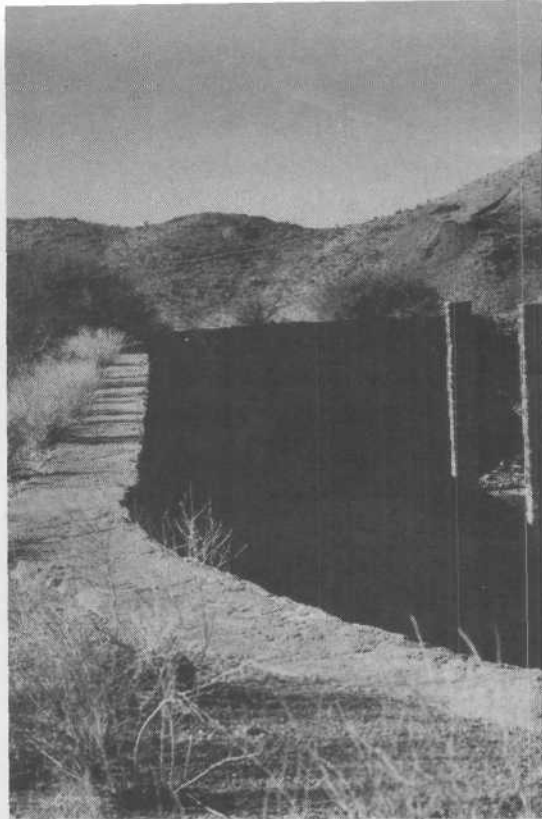
Our map indicated the road we wanted should join the Highway at a point designated as "Boulder Inn." When the odometer indicated we should be approaching the turnoff, a few building loomed into view. They proved to be the "inn" — a bar and cafe. What startled us was not only a road sign but a huge

A reservoir, designed to provide water for White Hills, is still in good repair.

sign above it announcing "Golden Horseshoe Ranchos — Fun in the sun retirement — 9 miles east." Good heavens, a retirement community out here in the boondocks — miles from any city? We couldn't believe it. Our interest was aroused and we decided to take a look after exploring the old mining camp.

We continued east on a wide graded road. "Do you suppose some of the mines are working now the price of silver is up?" I asked the other half of the team. "It is possible, but rather doubtful. None of the silver mines we have recently visited have shown any signs of opening again," was Jerry's reply. At this point, we entered a stand of Joshua trees. So commonly found in Nevada and on California's Mojave Desert, there are only a few stands in Arizona.

After traveling just over five miles from the highway, we reached the base of the White Hills and the site of the

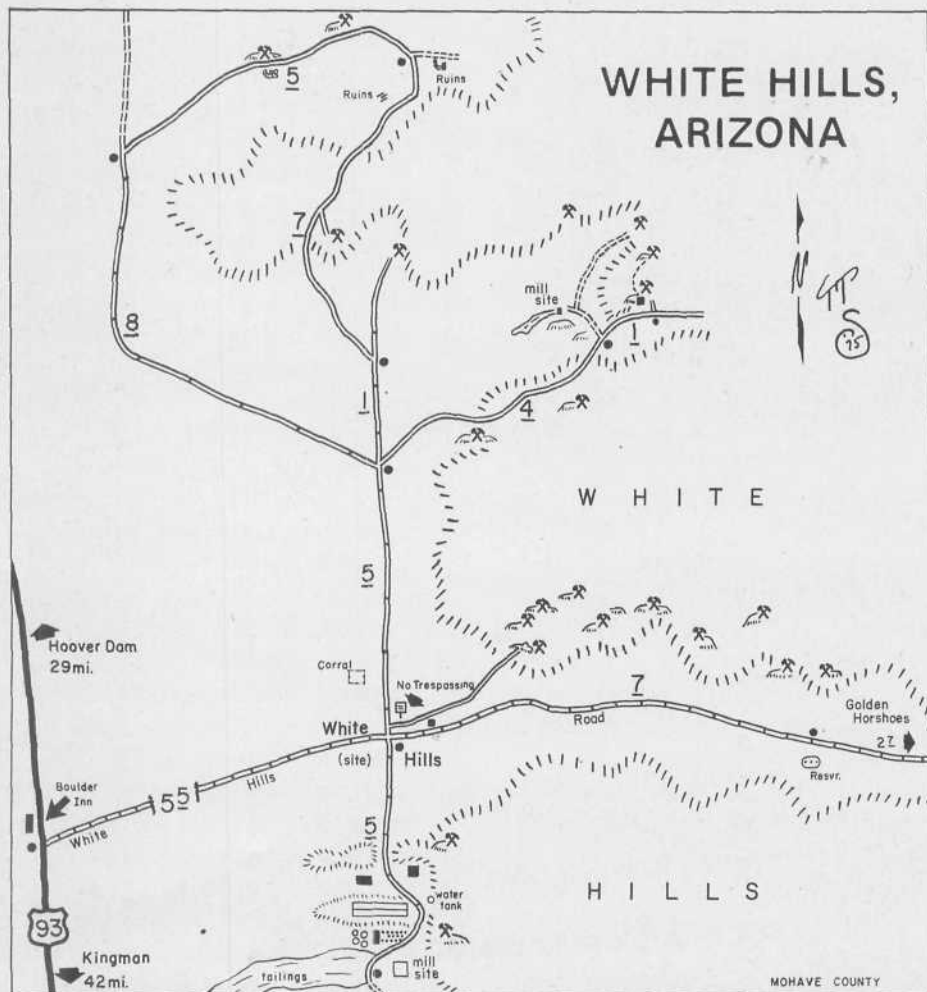


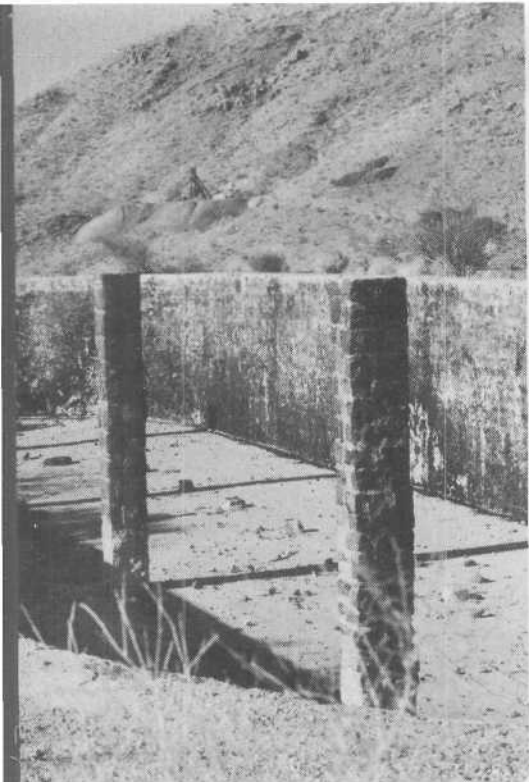
ghost town. Of the latter, little remained except for the roof of one collapsed building plus the rubble and rubbish left behind when a town dies. Pulling off onto the main, bladed north-south road, we enjoyed a coffee break while we studied the hills. The nearest one was covered with dumps, prospect holes and adits. There were so many mounds circling the hill, it looked as if giant gophers had held a convention.

A sign at the junction proclaimed "Buffalo Lake Mines Ltd., White Hills Mine, Authorized Personnel Only, Beyond this point." We didn't trespass but followed the crossroad north a short distance and turned left at a three-way fork. In less than a mile, we left the main road and headed into the hills on a two-track trail. Mines were everywhere. There had, indeed, been considerable activity in what is called the Indian Secret Mining District.

We stopped frequently to look over mines and the ruins of old stone cabins. Several sizable piles of bleached and splintered planks indicated the sites of large buildings — one might have been a former dining hall. Pieces of old glass and soldered cans were seen but no whole bottles.

The road gradually curved south. It led us by a number of mines to a side road where we came across the original mill site; then, back to the three-fork junction. We had taken the circle tour!





"We still haven't found the ruins of a 40-stamp mill," I remarked to Jerry. "Perhaps we had better check out the road running south," he responded. In doing so, we passed two buildings not visible from the main road. Just beyond them we stopped at a couple of long, narrow concrete vats into which water had been piped from a tank on the hill. Sacks of lime, many spilling their contents from weathering, were still stacked along the edge of the vats.

We speculated about the set-up and couldn't figure out the mining technique that had been used. When Jerry climbed the hill to take some photographs, he called to me, "Drive beyond the vats. Boy, will you be surprised." I did, and was.

Hidden from view was the darndest array of pipes and tanks — a Rube Goldberg nightmare! Now we could understand the system. Crushed ore was screened, leached out with lime, then run through a series of cyanide tanks. We counted 16 small inter-connected tanks and four large ones. We learned later this had been an unsuccessful operation by a Canadian company in the 1940's. Just south of the tanks was the old mill site we had been seeking and a huge tailings dump.

There had been an absence of traffic along the White Hills Road, even though a sign at the townsite stated, "Joshua Forest — Golden Horseshoes Subdivision

3 miles, Trailer Park, Campground, Picnic Area, Telephone." With our curiosity still aroused, we slowly headed east up the pass. More mines and adits were seen on the hills. Shortly, a low, very flat hill — seemingly out of place — captured our attention. As we drove alongside it proved to be the old concrete reservoir. Oval-shaped with tarred sides, it was still in good condition. Continuing up the pass, we observed many, intact sections of the wooden pipeline.

Leaving the hills, we entered a high valley and a forest of large Joshua trees. The change in flora from the western side of the White Hills was amazing. Lush and green grew a tremendous variety of desert plants.

Several attractive, old mining buildings greeted us at the subdivision office. Owners Hal and Jackie Brown proved to be gracious hosts. In the tradition of true western hospitality, we were soon enjoying a welcome cup of coffee in their attractive mobilehome. We learned it had been their dream to leave the bright lights of San Francisco to settle in a beautiful and remote area of Arizona.

A little over a decade ago, their dream

was realized. Happiness and contentment they have found and by subdividing their property, others of like mind have come to join them. Hal has developed a deep interest in the history of the region in which he lives. Four-wheel-drive trips and research in mining archives have given him a knowledgeable background of early activities.

Exploring the old mining camp of White Hills had been most rewarding. This was the type of country we love — vast expanses of primeval desert land. As we came down from the pass, we stopped to take one last look. Sharply outlined in the distance were row after row of hills marching across the silent land. Under a canopy of bright blue sky, dotted with pillowy mounds of clouds, it seemed as if we "could see forever."

Meeting people who shared our deep reverence for this lonely land had been an added bonus. They, too, had been willing to give up the frills of civilization to seek a better way of life. To do so brings a precious gift from the desert — an inner peace and contentment found only when you life with, not just on, this Great Planet Earth. □

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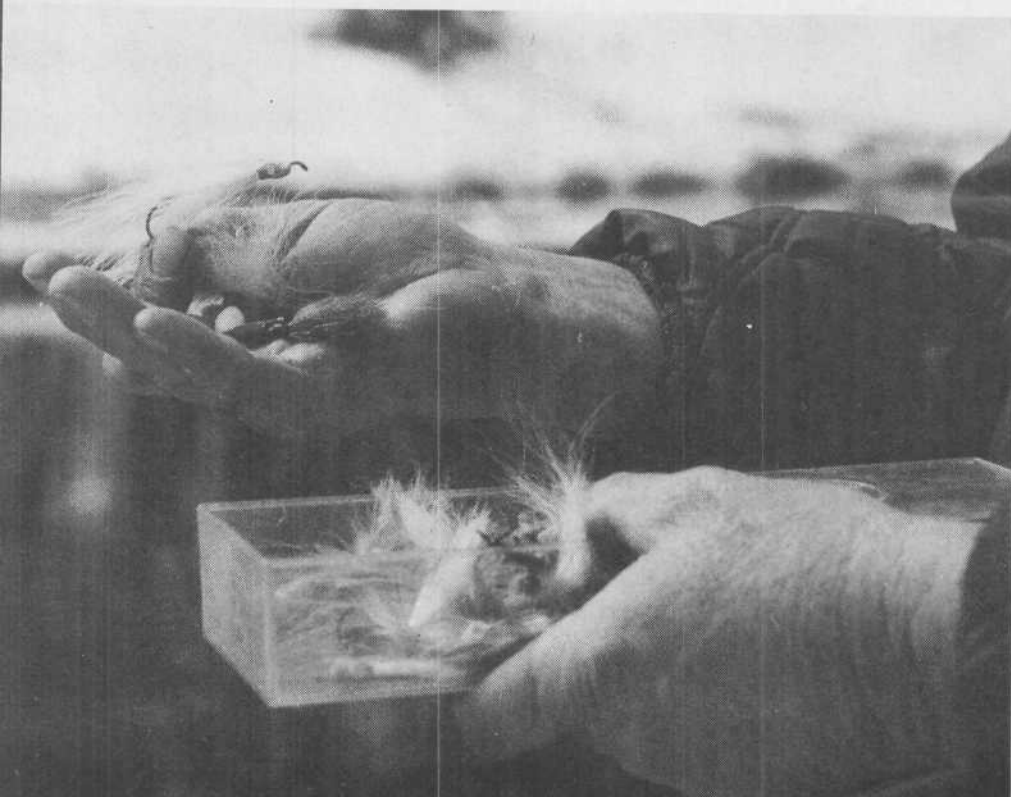
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WALLEYES

by
HARTT
WIXOM



I WATCHED AS the angler cast a "black bomber" lure into the current. He let it drift deep into a long riffle, then began a sporadic retrieve. Seconds later the surface sprayed furiously as a large tail lashed out at the world. Then a large head appeared, thrashing violently. Soon the line bore deep toward snags on the opposite bank. The form broke water twice more.

Finally E.V. Stapley eased the fish onto a jutting sandbar.

"See, I told you we've got some nice walleyes in this country," he smiled.

E.V. "Ebb" Stapley is conservation officer for northern Millard County at the

Upper left: A favorite place to fish the Lower Sevier River, just downstream from Delta.

Lower left: Bucktails and streamers are excellent offerings for lunker walleyes.

Right: Typical walleye will run about three to four pounds.



ON THE DESERT

edge of Utah's Great Salt Lake Desert. The major community in this area, Delta, appears to be part of that desert on most maps. The facts are that the elevation is low for the arid west at some 3,000 feet, and desert-type plant life surrounds this oasis. Maps also show some blue representing Delta-Millard Assn. Dam (DMAD), Sevier River, Gunnison Bend and others. But in this terrain few anglers even bother to give such irrigation catchalls a second look. If there were any fish at all they would have to be a hardy brand of carp.

I thought so, too, until people like Stapley, long time native of this desert

country, insisted that walleyes planted several years ago and all but forgotten, were flourishing. We met him at his home in Delta. He led us first to Gunnison Bend, but no strikes. We figured it was too low and warm for fish, even the tolerant walleye. Besides wasn't the walleye an eastern fish? Who ever heard of them in the western desert?

But Stapley proved his point on his first cast on the Sevier just below DMAD. The walleye was a nice, fat, healthy three and one-half pounder.

Actually, Utah and other western states like Wyoming are beginning to blossom with excellent walleye fishing.

For example, the Utah Fish-Game Division planted young walleyes in Utah Lake some half a dozen years ago, and the second year spawners began to show up in the feeder Provo River. By the next year fish were being taken in the Provo up to six pounds. Now 10-12 lb. fish are taken occasionally during the March run. Average was four-six lbs.

Few were taken in the lake, possibly because fishermen were using trout techniques for them. Even those who fished Utah Lake regularly failed to turn up any walleyes. But tagging studies by biologists indicated the lake had a fair

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population of them. What's more, not all were spawning in the streams. A fair share were laying eggs around the shoreline of various islands around the lake. Then fishermen found the answer: dead minnows fished slowly around the walleye haunts. Dedicated anglers began taking dozens of big fish.

The same thing happened in Wyoming. Keyhold Reservoir and other eastern Wyoming waters too warm for trout began to move from barren to boom status. Would trout fishermen spend their time for walleyes, or were the fish-game departments just wasting their time? The answer was definitely pro walleye.

Studies show that competition is keen to best the state walleye records, and it continues to go up each spring,

sometimes several times in a week as fishermen learn more about their habits and habitat. The shores of the Provo River during the mid-March spawning run are now crowded with anglers in known walleye hot spots. Yet, trout waters nearby, open year around, are not nearly so jammed with fishermen.

The walleye seems to have found a home in the West. He is being taken now in most of the western states, with widespread introduction during the past five years. He is gaining a reputation as a top table fare, and ferocious striking power on artificials, albeit a little low on fighting stamina.

He is now found throughout most of Utah. Some of the waters where the big-eyed true perch (not pike) has been introduced include Yuba Reservoir and smaller waters in central Utah, lakes along and on the Bear River in northern Utah and some in the southern portion of the state. Seldom does he crowd out any top game fish already there. In fact, he is a bonus fish, for he lives where even the most tolerant of trout, the brown, won't thrive.

In the Sevier River, for instance, the brownie lives in rapids along canyon country 70 miles east of Delta, but only the walleye thrives along lower sections of the stream. This means that populations living in "marginal or unproductive waters of the West can now enjoy game fish angling," in the words of one fishery biologist. In some waters like Boreham he's replacing trout.

Best methods of taking the western walleye appear to be much like his eastern and mid-western counterpart. Lead-head or jig flies are a favorite. Best color seems to be yellow. But red and other bright hues also attract the fish. Spinners are also successful. They will also take bait.

When actually spawning he is in shallow water, often at the tail of holes. But when resting he is taken deep. This means many snags, but veteran walleye fishermen take along plenty of equipment.

Will he be introduced to more waters? The answer appears to be yes.

Desert areas in particular seem to have irrigation water that can be used and rechanneled into downstream lakes without bothering the walleye. He should be planted more frequently throughout the Great Basin in particular

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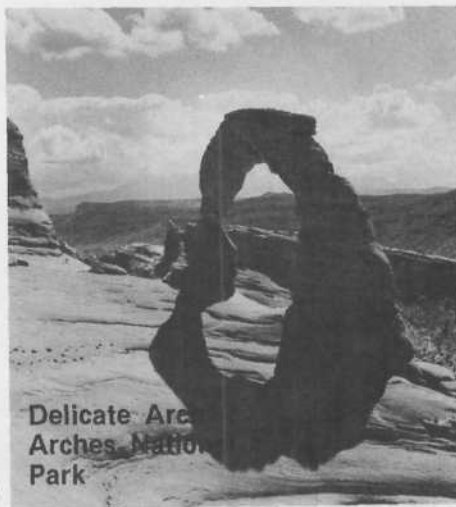
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as it appears the fishermen will seek him out. And that is beginning to happen, even if the inaugural was less than sensational.

At first he was looked upon with curiosity, as perhaps were the first carp introduced into the United States in the late 1800's. But the walleye has attracted the attention of many anglers once they eat the white, delicious meat. There are no special fees for walleye fishing in Utah. Contact the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, 1596 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, for details on licenses and annual regulations. Don't overlook the winter, either, as a prime time to go after him — temperatures on the Sevier are desert-warm and you can fish at a time when things are too cold for high-elevation trout. This marble-eyed fish, the walleye, also feeds voraciously after dark and the Beehive State's year-around fisheries such as the Sevier are also open 24 hours a day.

Canoeing, rockhounding and camping fit in well at Yuba State Park, and down the entire Sevier. While to the uninitiated it may appear as rolling "wasteland," there is a profusion of wild flowers and multi-hued rock outcroppings. All of the desert's wild and starkly charismatic lore is there, including the trilobite. Delta rock shops display many of these fossil insects from the Paleozoic era. Remnants from this period, when the "lion-like" trilobites lorded over the lower insect world, sometimes grew to monster size in Millard County — much larger than the usual one or two inches long.

The lower Sevier is also an area of rich western history. A party of emigrants here killed a well-liked Ute chieftan named Moshoguop. The Utes took out their revenge a short time later by doing in eight members of a U.S. governmental survey party, including their leader, J.W. Gunnison. This area is also south of the pony express route from Utah to California. It proved "Indian country" to Callao.

There is more: coyotes, bobcats, antelope, golden eagles, ground squirrels, weasels, an occasional mule deer, and those cheerful bastions of the desert, the horned lark. All of this, and walleyes too. While a relative newcomer, he is converting many who spent their vacations in the mountains to see and enjoy the desert. □

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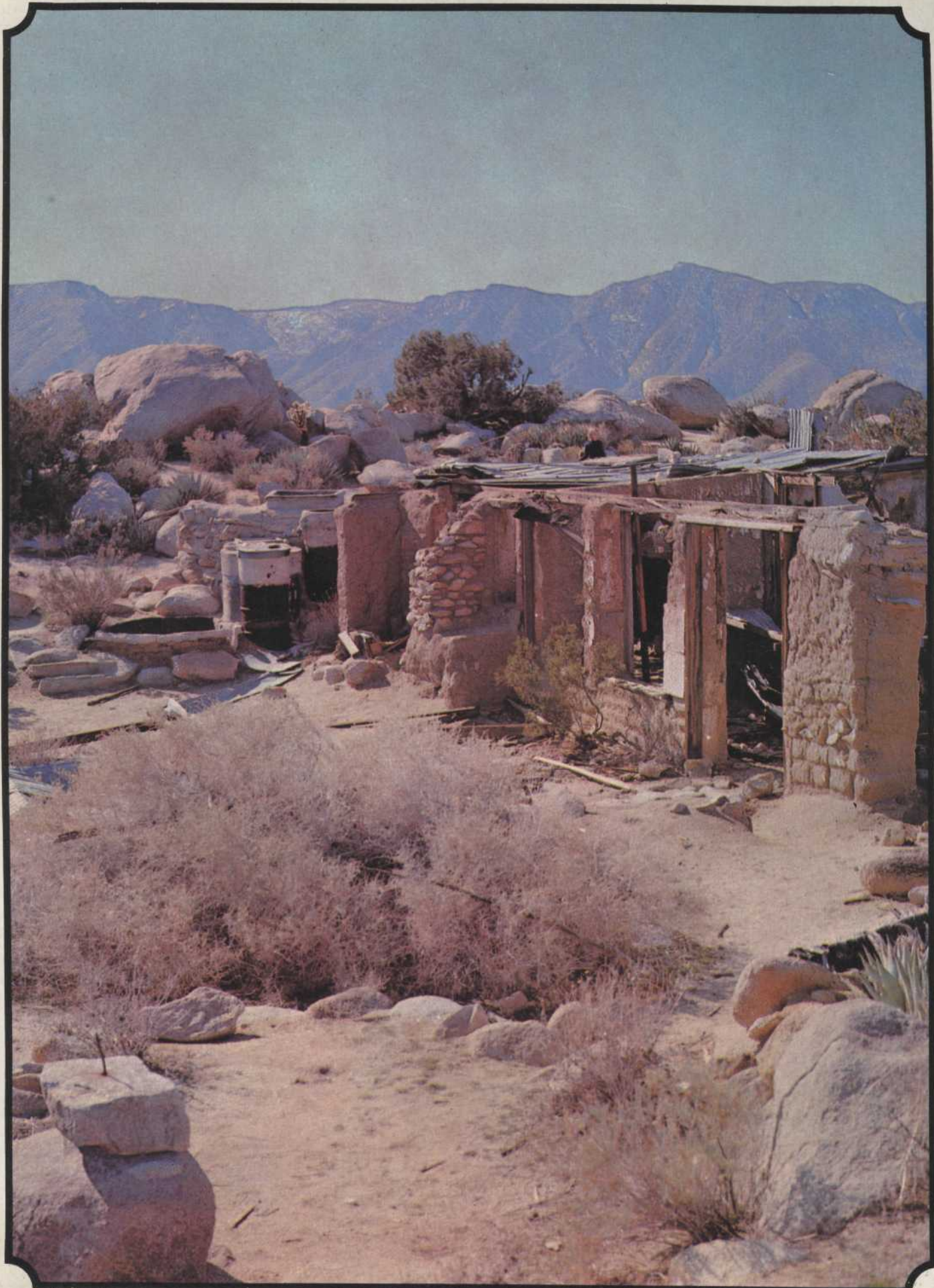
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Yaquitepec

by ERNIE COWAN

GHOST MOUNTAIN — An appropriate dateline. As a chill winter wind sweeps across this rocky knob, rattling weathered boards of an old house, it is easy to imagine why they call this place Ghost Mountain.

Here, in a corner of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, stands the crumbling ruins of an unusual home, hardly more than a ghost itself. Now lifeless and cold, this adobe, wood and tin building was once warm with a family fire that burned for 15 years as a modern family sought to escape to a primitive lifestyle.

The house on Ghost Mountain was known as Yaquitepec, or "home of the Yaqui Tribe." The man who gave it that name sought to live as the Yaqui Indians had lived.

That man was Marshal South, who brought his wife, Tanya, to the mountain top in 1932. During the next 15 years, three children would be born to the Souths and they would learn to live and survive in their harsh desert environment.

The story of Yaquitepec and Marshal South is a mystery in many ways, but because South wrote a series of articles in *Desert Magazine* during the 1940's, some interesting insight into life on Ghost Mountain is available.

South died in 1948, a year after the family left the mountain. The reason they left is not clear, and Tanya South, who now lives in San Diego, refuses to talk about her years on the 3,000-foot desert peak.

I did talk with Rider South, the oldest of the three South children. Now an aircraft mechanic in San Diego, he has some graphic memories of his years on Ghost Mountain. His most vivid recollection is of a great brush fire that burned for more than a month on Granite Peak to the west of their desert refuge.

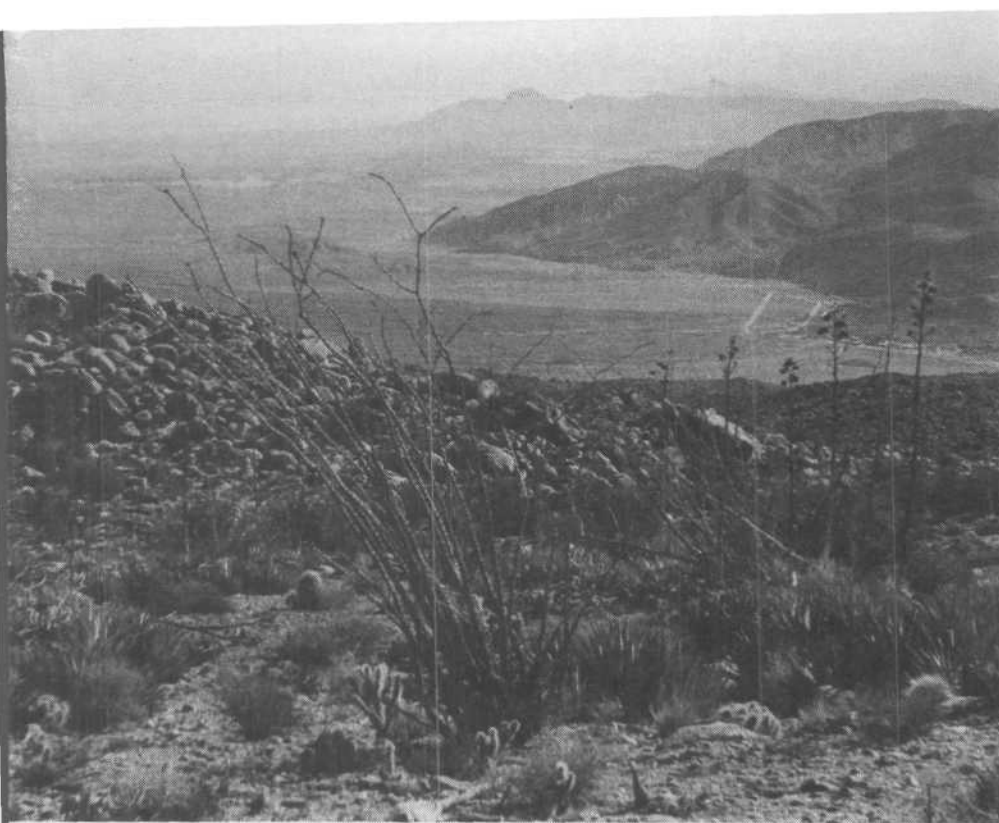
Rider recalls that the family feared the fire might sweep across the desert and destroy their home. South even mentioned such a fire in one of his *Desert Magazine* articles.

The South story at Yaquitepec began in 1932 when Marshal and Tanya closed their home and with all their belongings headed into the desert for what South called "an experiment in primitive living." They were both well educated, he a writer and she a teacher.

Randall Henderson, the late editor, publisher and founder of *Desert Magazine*, wrote these words about the Souths in February 1942, 10 years after their arrival at Yaquitepec.

"A little-used trail led them to the foot of Ghost Mountain. There they left their car, climbed to the summit and amid the rocks and agave and junipers selected the site for their new home. It was many miles to the nearest water, they had no shelter except a tarpaulin. But there they have remained, and through the years have been able to collect enough rainwater to build a modest 'dobe cottage. Three South children have been born since they went to Ghost Mountain. There are more comforts now than in the

The crumbling ruins of Marshal South's desert retreat high atop Ghost Mountain. Note in the lower left corner the sundial made by inserting a steel rod into a piece of granite.



early days. But except for an occasional trip to town for a few necessities for their children, they follow closely the pattern of life of the Indians who were roaming the desert when the white men came."

Little has changed on Ghost Mountain since the Souths first called it home. The same mile-long trail winds up the west side of the mountain which stands senti-

nel at the far eastern end of Blair Valley. A road, passable to most cars, heads east from County Highway S-2 and the Little Pass Primitive Campground, and dead ends at the trailhead to Yaquitepec.

It's an easy and gradual climb up the mountain as you wind your way past twisted junipers and mounds of boulders piled with character. As you reach the

crest of the mountain, a vast panorama opens to the east and it's easy to see why South chose this location for his home.

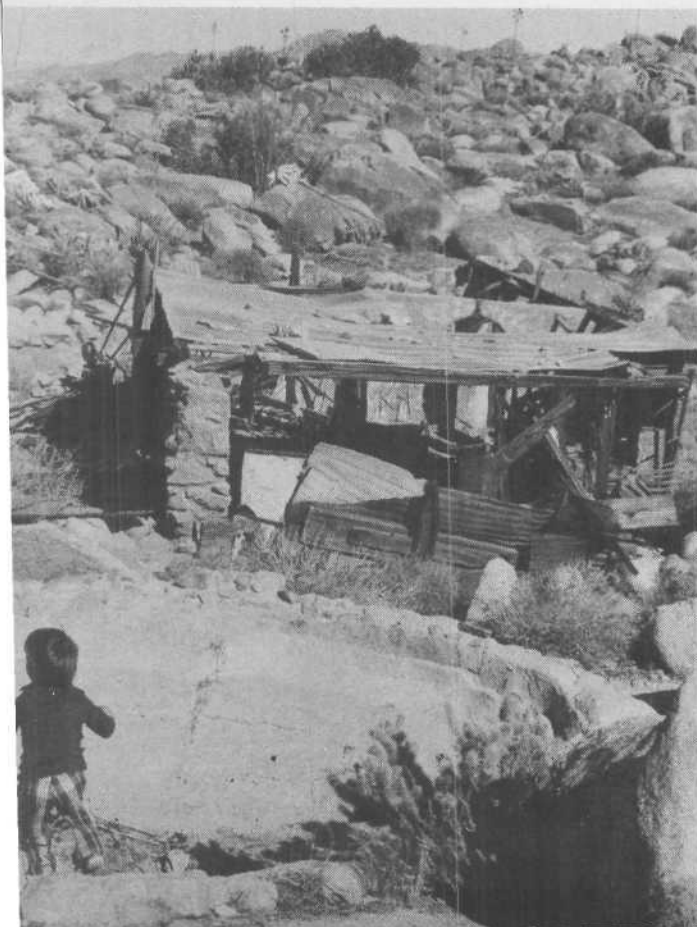
Here in a saddle are the ruins of the once-neat little adobe home. At first glance you may hardly notice it, since much of the house was made from the desert itself, the rocks, the sand and plants.

And as the elements and man take their toll, Yaquitepec is slowly returning to the soil. But Yaquitepec was once a functional home. Its tin roof acted as a water collector, draining the occasional rainfall into gutters that carried it into asphalt-lined tanks for storage. Before South built the tanks, water had to be hauled on their backs a long distance from the nearest source.

For the most part, the Souths lived from the land. They grew much of their own food in little terraced plots between huge boulders that cap the mountain. And they followed the ways of the Indians, gathering seeds, roots and plants from the desert for food.

They made their own pottery, too. For years they made it as the Indians had, using the fire from mescal trunks or yucca stalks to cure their ware for use.

The first of the South children to be born on the mountain was Rider, in 1934. He was followed four years later by Rudyard, and in October 1940 by Victoria. South obviously loved his children, their antics and the things about life he was



Above: View to the east from Yaquitepec. Left: Richie Cowan walks through what was once a concrete-lined pond the Souths would fill with rainwater. Right: The South kitchen in Yaquitepec with baking oven on left and large warming fireplace at right.

Desert/May 1975



teaching them, because a major part of his articles in *Desert Magazine* were devoted to them.

Life at Yaquitepec was not easy, however. It was more than just a long vacation and sunny days of playing with the kids. They had to work to survive and when they were not working, the Souths held school to educate their children.

Mostly their days were filled with adding to their home, making candles, gathering firewood or food, teaching the children, milking the goats, making pottery, or tending the crops.

South wrote with humor about the small acreage they had planted in crops, but open ground is scarce on Ghost Mountain and what little they did cultivate provided them with a good supply of such things as chives, beans, lettuce and radishes. The garden was a great source of pride to the family.

But it was not all work at Yaquitepec, either. South often wrote about those "vacation days" when someone would mention picnic and all work would be dropped for a trek off to some remote corner of their desert world to explore Indian caves, follow an old Indian trail or look for desert animals.

While the South years at Yaquitepec are not far removed in time, they are far removed in style. It is perhaps that fact that makes the South story so interesting to visitors who climb the rocky mountain. That mile-long climb takes you back

only 30 years in time, but to a lifestyle as old as the Indians called Yaqui.

In the October 1942 issue of *Desert Magazine*, readers of South's regular "Desert Refuge" feature were saddened to learn that the family was leaving Yaquitepec. They had locked their neat little home and were setting off to the east in search of a place with more water. Yaquitepec could not supply what was needed for a family of five with two goats and two burros.

During the next year the South family headed east into Arizona, Nevada and Utah in search of a more abundant, but isolated, homesite. They spent the winter in a little Utah valley, living in an abandoned house with the consent of its owners. But that was not the place they wanted to call home. Their real home, Yaquitepec, was still calling them back.

In the spring they continued their journey, but their search for a location better than Yaquitepec was futile. In the fall they returned to Yaquitepec. The winter rains that year were plentiful and the cisterns on Ghost Mountain were kept full and the problem of water was no longer a major one.

The last few years of the South family's life continued as in the past. But in 1947 the family left the mountain and a year later South died and with him a spirit that had lived on the mountain died, too.

Now, nearly 30 years later, Yaquitepec is near ruin. The adobe walls are melting away and vandals are speeding the process. Park rangers are hoping something can be done to save Yaquitepec from ruin.

Bud Getty, manager of the half-million-acre state park, has put out a call for help. He is hoping there are groups who might be interested in adopting Yaquitepec as a project.

"We have no money now for restoration or even preservation," says Getty. "But Yaquitepec is an important part of the desert's history and it should be saved from slipping away."

A few groups have responded to Getty's plea, and it is hoped they will be able to save Yaquitepec from further destruction, and perhaps eventually restore it to how it was when the South family lived there.

It really would be wonderful if there was once again a little life on Ghost Mountain. □

Desert/May 1975

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Lizard on the Go!

by K. L. BOYNTON

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THE DESOLATE desert flats, heat-ridden and spare of vegetation, is home for the whiptail lizard *Cnemidophorus tigris*. This is the same little number with the slim body and very long tail who, because of his exceedingly fast footwork, is also known as the race-runner or swift Jack. "Speed" could well be his middle name, too; speed not only in leaving unpleasant situations behind in a cloud of desert dust, but for the fast tempo at which he goes about his normal day. Alert and chuck full of energy, this lizard is so successful at desert living that his kind is found in abundance from southeast Oregon to far down Mexico way.

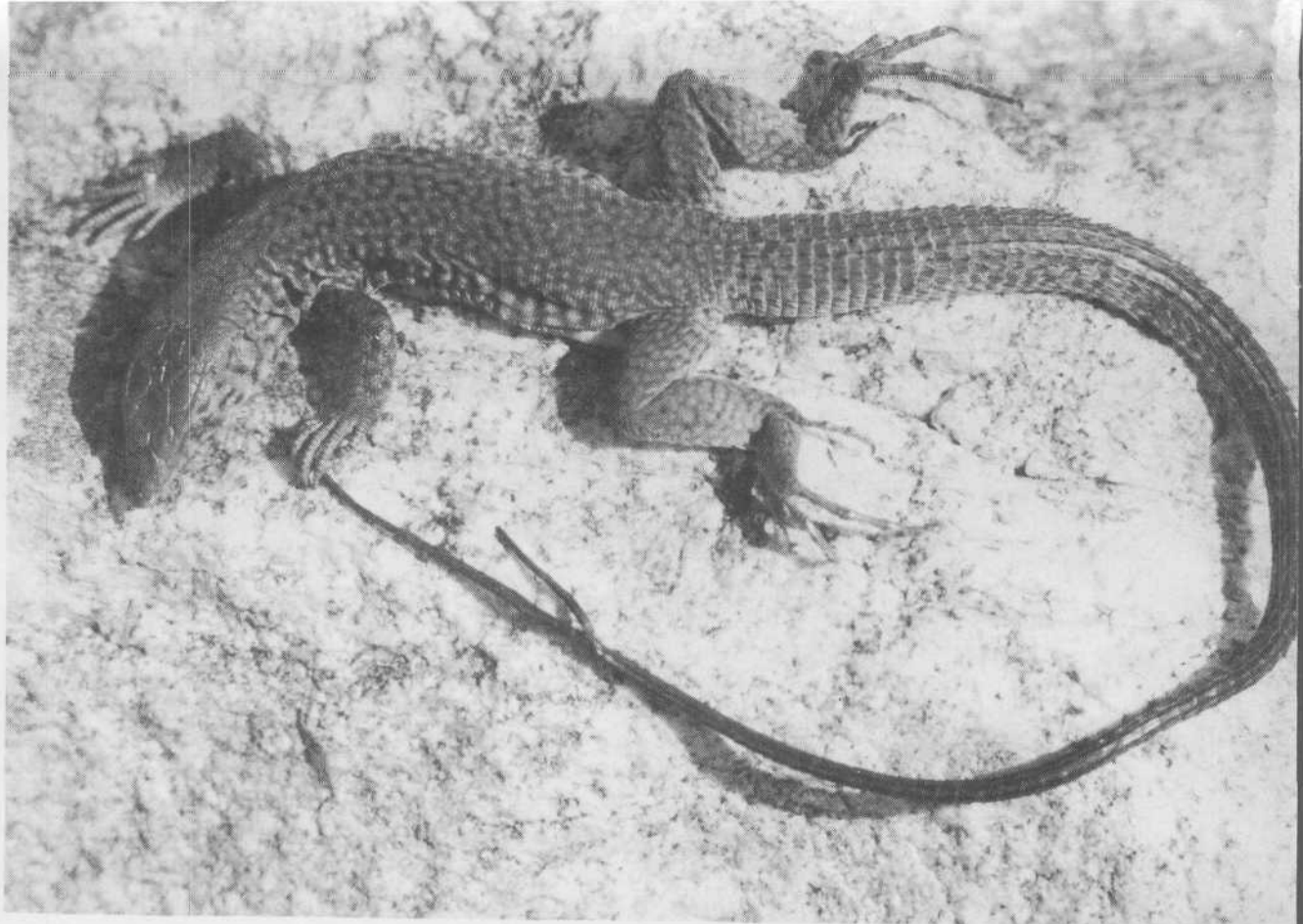
Like many another small desert dweller, the whiptail's survival is based on a hole in the ground. Maybe he dug it himself whiptail fashion: scraping the dirt aside with his strong forefeet and claws and turning around periodically to shove an accumulated pile out. Such a lizard-made hole, about one to two inches in diameter and slanting well downwards, is long enough to accommodate his body-tail length comfortably. More than likely, however, his residence is a secondhand one, excavated by a prior owner, probably some hard working



Photo by
George M. Bradt.

Whiptails sometimes lose their tails when attacked by predators. This lizard nearly lost his, but the break was not serious. A second tail has now grown from the wound.

Photo by Jim Cornett.



desert rodent.

In this underground palaccio, *C. tigris* spends the inactive part of his life. Here he hibernates in winter; here, likewise, he sits out the high heat of the mid-summer days. It is, of course, his boudoir, its doorway plugged up tight against unwelcome visitors and the chill of night. When the morning sun has begun to warm up the ground surface outside, he opens his door and comes slowly out to bask and soak up some of its heat himself. Being a member of the cold-blooded brotherhood, he was short-changed in the way of body heat-making machinery of his own. He has to de-

pend, therefore, on the sun and ground radiation to bring his temperature up before he can really get going, his 100 degree F. temperature at emergence being too low for activity. At last, the sun having done its stuff and his temperature finally up to a working 104, the whiptail is raring to go.

Rushing here, there, he's after breakfast: bugs, beetles, flies, wasps, ants, sowbugs, butterflies, termites, spiders, scorpions, insect eggs, larvae, anything in this line is on the menu. Equipped with a keen sense of smell, he probes his snout into everything, digging for tasty bits to be had underground, scraping

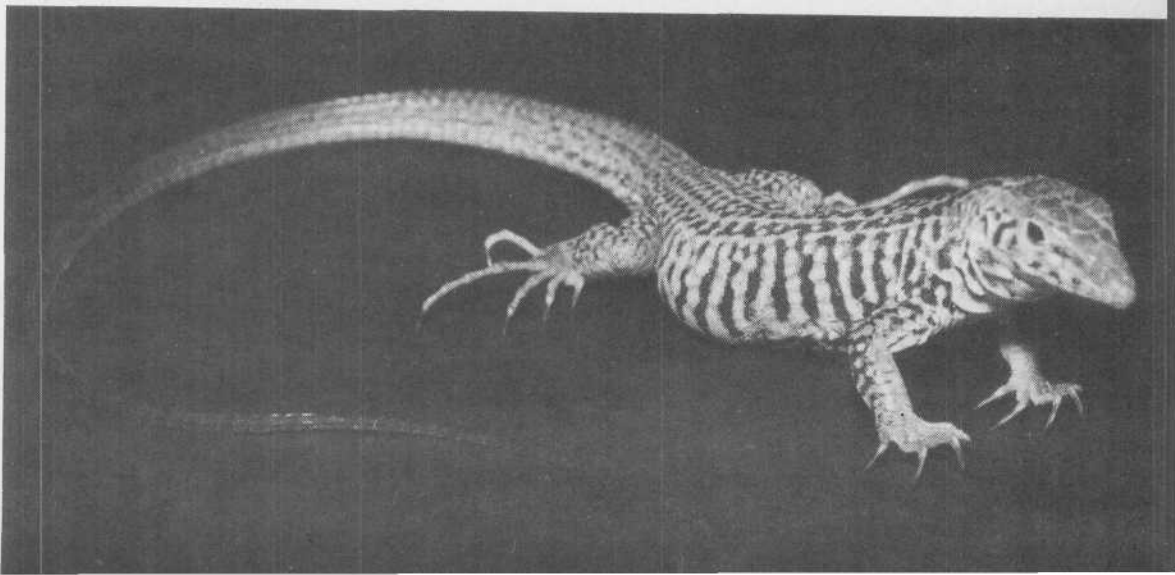
with a business-like front foot, and carefully inspecting the dirt as he turns it over. Keen of eyesight, he looks over the sparse shrubs and vegetation for caterpillars, climbing swiftly to pick off any he spies, hidden as they are against the foliage. But hungry as he is, he's constantly alert and watchful, ready to take off instantly with surprising speed if any danger threatens.

Biologist Kenneth Asplund, working in Colorado and Baja California, regarded these whiptails whizzing about their daily affairs and noted their rapid breathing. He knew there must be something special here, and indeed his sub-

The powerful claws and feet of the whiptail aid him in digging up insects and larvae.

Whiptails are found in all habitats from wind-blown sand hummocks to rocky desert mountains.

Photo by Jim Cornett.



sequent tests showed that these lizards have the highest sustained oxidative metabolism among reptiles. True, the desert iguana can take up oxygen at a faster rate — for two minutes. The whiptail, on the other hand, with its ability for sustaining a high metabolism during activity, has the steam for the almost constant movement that marks his day.

Asplund further found to his surprise

that the bigger individuals among his whiptails could even raise their temperature one to two degrees above air temperature. Was this the beginning of evolutionary selection for heat retention? Yet, the lizards themselves seemed to make little use of this ability. They did not emerge in the morning any earlier than the smaller individuals, nor did they speed up that first morning warm-up period by any activity. He pondered this for a long time, concluding finally that since overheating is the worst problem in a desert, selection for the retention of heat among the lizards dwelling there might actually be repressed. What might happen if they were moved to cooler climes was interesting to speculate.

Anyhow, these in the desert, working daytimes as they do, must cope with soaring temperatures around them. They are able to keep active during the day chiefly by shuttling back and forth between the open sunshine areas and what poor shade is afforded by the sparse vegetation. The ground temperature between the two areas is always different. As long as the ground temperature in the sunlight was under 118 degrees, the lizards could hotfoot around on it busy at their affairs, frequently popping back into the shade with its much cooler ground. As the day advances, however, things get hotter all over and the ground in the shade unfortunately warms up, too. When the temperature there reached 104 degrees, it was too hot to provide cooling relief, and the lizards retired underground.

Interesting enough, the smaller individuals seemed to have the advantage in that they were able to be out in the sunshine for longer periods, the larger ones being forced to cool off oftener in the shade. Besides, the little ones could utilize smaller bits of shade, even shadows only slightly wider than their own body. All in all, it seems that smaller body size is a selection advantage since these smaller lizards can occupy a greater diversity of habitat in a desert region where temperature is a problem and vegetation so scarce.

C. tigris is offbeat in having no black peritoneum — the lining of the body cavity — in fact, as Anatomist Wilbur Mayhew pointed out, this is the only daytime genus of lizard without one. Since such a lining acts as a shield, keeping

shortwave ultraviolet radiation from penetrating the body, it would seem that the whiptail would be in bad trouble. Not so. *C. tigris* has heavy deposits of black pigment in its skin, which apparently are just as effective in excluding shortwave ultraviolet light. Hence its ability to stand so much direct sunlight.

Biologist Elinor Benes, knowing that the retinas in the eyes of these daytime lizards are composed entirely of cone cells (the kind of photoreceptors especially adapted to high light conditions and color vision), wondered just how good their color sense was. Did they use it in selection of their food in natural conditions? So she rigged up some colored discs and put 10 *C. tigris* to working, dividing them into two teams of five each. One group was rewarded with a mealworm if the proper red disc was chosen; picking the green disc gave them an electric shock. The other team had the reverse problem: pick the right green disc for the worm; the red one was the shocker.

Eleven different pairs of test colors were offered each group and each lizard had to score five right answers in a row without error with a no-test weekend thrown in. Each test got harder because the colors were closer in tone each time. The lizards worked at their own learning rate, and as was to be expected, some were very smart and some very dumb. At that it took an average of 31 days for each pair of discs to be learned right. The test went on during the winter, and discrimination between the colors was obviously harder although daylight coming into the lab seemed to help much more than additional electric light. Still, the lizards finally came up with perfect responses even though the colors got closer together.

All went well until the lizards came to problem #10. Only one was ever able to do that one right, and it took far more trials. Nobody could do #11. The hues were now adjacent ones, and too close for any of the lizards to see the difference.

Looking over the performance of her scholars, Benes concluded that *C. tigris* can indeed make fine distinctions in color differences, since all of them easily accomplished the tests as close as three steps apart on the color chart, although they were never seen simultaneously. Moreover, since the lizards can do this,



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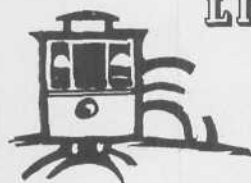
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and further transfer what they learned from one disc to the other, they can transfer what they learn in the field. Once an insect with red markings, for instance, proved unpalatable, the next one that looked like it would be rejected on sight.

So, with food-getting pretty well in hand, and the business of temperature regulation ditto, it would appear that *C. tigris*, no matter where it lived, could do all right. In fact, Biologist Emil Pianka, trudging about the Southwest, marveled at the way they thrived under such different but equally difficult conditions as the cold high desert flats of the Great Basin and the low scorches far to the south. Whiptails all, but how did the northern and southern populations solve the specific problems peculiar to their particular brand of desert? From his long and careful study some interesting facts emerged.

Things are different between the two. The whiptails in Texas, for instance, mature in one year. It takes the Nevada bunch two years to grow up. The social season runs from April to late July in the south; only May and June in the

north. Thus, in the Great Basin with its short season of frost-free days, the whiptails can only turn out one batch of youngsters. Two families a year, on the other hand, is par for Texas whiptails. Nor are the sizes of the families the same: the northern whiptails, interestingly enough, turn out bigger clutches.

In a way, the northern whiptails are tougher, being active at lower air temperatures than the southern, but strange to report, many of them in the Great Basin aestivate during the midsummer. This is perhaps because of the great daily range in temperature there, yet it is seemingly a silly thing to do since their activity season is so short. The main problems that face the northern bunch are due to the physical environment. On the other hand, the southern contingent's bad problem is mainly biological: heavy competition for food insects from a great many more kinds of birds and lizards that also live there. There is also more trouble from predators, as witness the many southerners minus parts of their tails. Tasty morsels, these whiptails, they are objects de lunch for the more numerous predatory birds and

snakes dwelling about them, to say nothing of the big leopard lizards 80 percent of whose diet is made up of its smaller lizard neighbors.

Anent all this, the team of biologists C.J. McCoy and G.A. Hoddenbach, in comparing conditions with their Colorado and Texas whiptails, came to the conclusion that the one breeding cycle in the north was the result of severe winters, plus the short late spring which produced less food for the emerging ladies to eat. Hence egg formation was delayed. The greater number of eggs in the northern clutches was the whiptail clan's answer evolved to make up for the one-family per year limitation set by climate.

Regardless of where they may reside, what with being so plastic and adjustable themselves and having the specific answers to specific habitat situations, the whiptails, as a tribe, are well equipped for desert living. That's why *C. tigris*, rushing around his daily affairs, is very apt to live out his three to four year life span. And, if he's alert, quite likely to keep his long tail intact by dint of his mighty fast footwork. □

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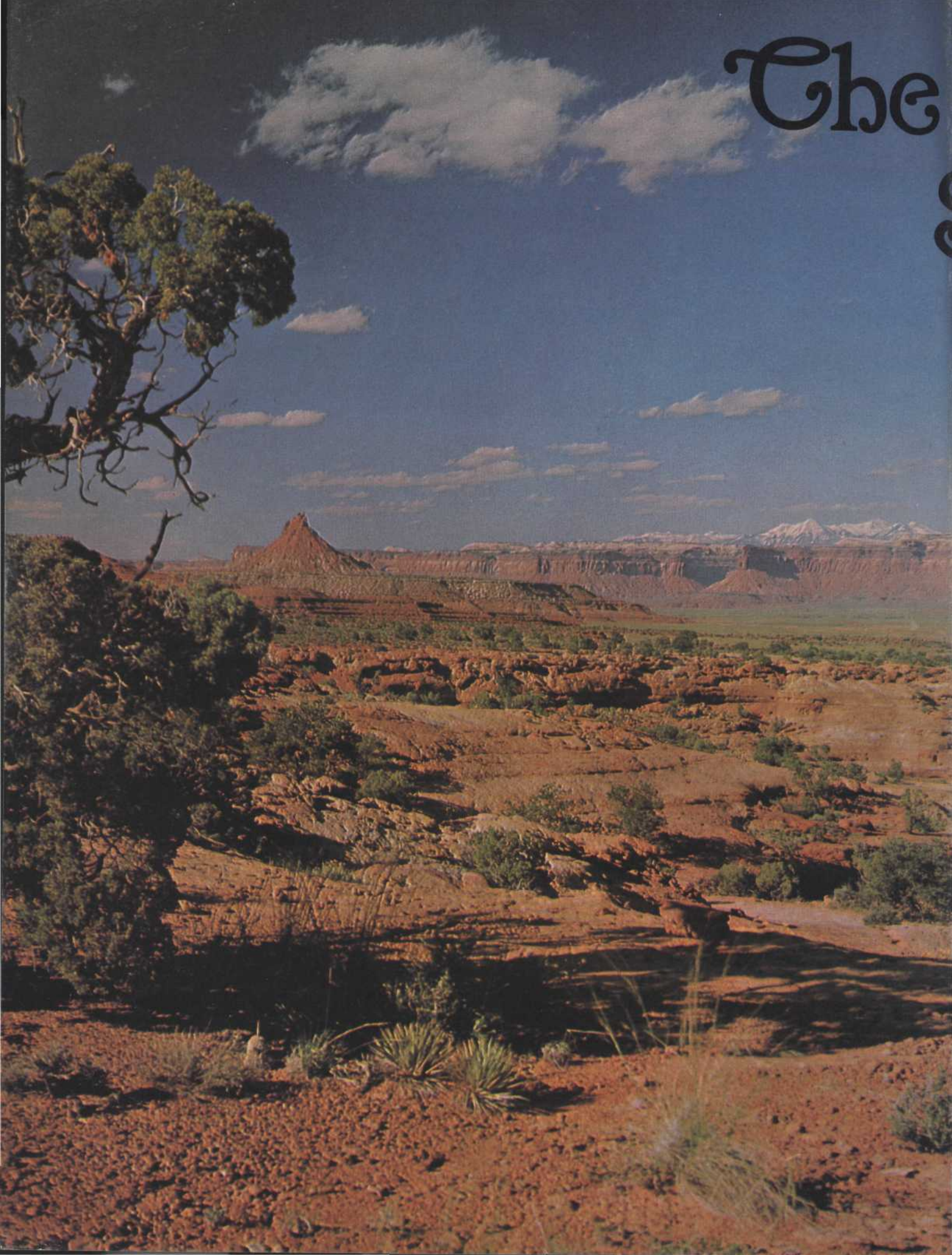
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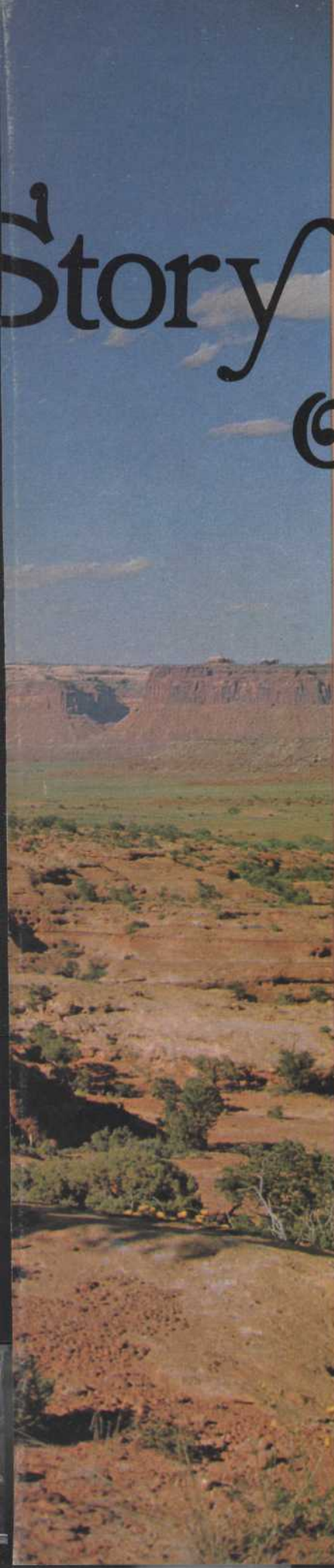


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Story of Davis Canyon

by F. A. BARNES

SPRING is the best time to visit beautiful Davis Canyon, when its deciduous trees are bright green and its sandy sage-flats are carpeted with bright wildflowers.

Autumn is a good time, too. Then, the cottonwood groves that cluster along its streams or near its springs brighten the canyon with blazing gold, and rabbit-bush and other fall-flowering desert plants add their own shades of yellow to the vivid scene.

Summer, from mid-June through August, is warm in Canyonlands National Park where Davis Canyon is located, but there are many who prefer to travel then, when the southwest desertlands belong to the life-giving sun.

*The rim of Davis Canyon offers lovely views to the north.
Photo by author.*

The story of Davis Canyon, and several similar canyons nearby, is the story of life and non-life working together over eons to produce a unique and charming result. This concerted effort began long, long ago with some very involved geological events. Somewhat simplified, here is what happened.

Many millions of years ago the region now known as the Four Corners area was disrupted by a long chain of violent events. Immense subterranean pressures forced molten magma upward through multiple laminations of sandstone, sediments, shale and limestone but never quite broke through to become surface volcanoes. Instead, the sheer mass of the thick crustal layers forced the magma to flow laterally from the central "wells," beneath harder layers of sandstone, thus producing vast underground "mushrooms" of porphyritic rock.

The surface of the land above these not-quite volcanoes was fractured and



South Sixshooter Peak guards the lower end of lovely unspoiled Davis Canyon. As this labyrinthine canyon complex approaches the Abajo foothills, the branching side-canyons grow deeper and narrower.

heaved upward into monstrous geologic "pimples." The land all around these unborn volcanoes was tilted, slanted upward by the magma intrusions far below.

All this happened long before the advent of mankind upon this planet, but even so life was present, adding its tiny increment of effect to the cataclysmic events. But in that era, the forces of ge-

ology and weather held center-stage in the drama that was to climax in the Davis Canyon of today.

During the next long period of time, thousands of feet of rock eroded away from the Four Corners region, slowly exposing the tops of the subterranean volcanoes. Patient but persistent weathering also eroded the cooled-magma

masses into barren, conical shapes. These shapes, once far underground but harder and more erosion-resistant than the surrounding sandstone, now stood free and tall, mountain ranges thrusting up from lower red sandstone desertland.

The more gently sloping land around these soaring peaks of porphyrite, where the sandstone layers had been tilted by intrusive magma but not terribly fractured, became a land of canyons. Eons of water runoff from the mountain highlands cut deeply into the sloping sandstone strata that lay on the mountain flanks and formed a series of deep and colorful gorges that radiated out from the mountains like spokes of a wheel.

One such mountain range, of the several that exist in the Four Corners region, is the Abajo Mountains of southeastern Utah. Canyonlands National Park lies to the north of the Abajos, and the southern end of this spectacular park contains several of the radiating canyons that were formed by the Abajos. One of these canyons is called Davis.

Life began playing a more important part in the creation of what Davis Canyon is today when the Anasazis, the "ancient ones," began to settle there. Archeologists are not certain when this prehistoric race of American Indians first arrived in that part of Utah, but they are fairly well agreed that the last of them disappeared mysteriously around 1250 A.D., or even earlier in some localities.

What matters, however, is that mankind did arrive in this unusual land, and left its mark when it departed hundreds of years later. Until that period, life had



This undercut rock ledge was once walled and compartmented for food storage, while those who used it for this lived in rock and log dwellings on another sheltered ledge high above.

This Anasazi granary perched on a ledge below an arch has two levels and two tiny ports. Note the sticks built into the mud-and-rock walls of the structure. These may be part of the internal floor, or handholds to aid access from beneath the arch opening.

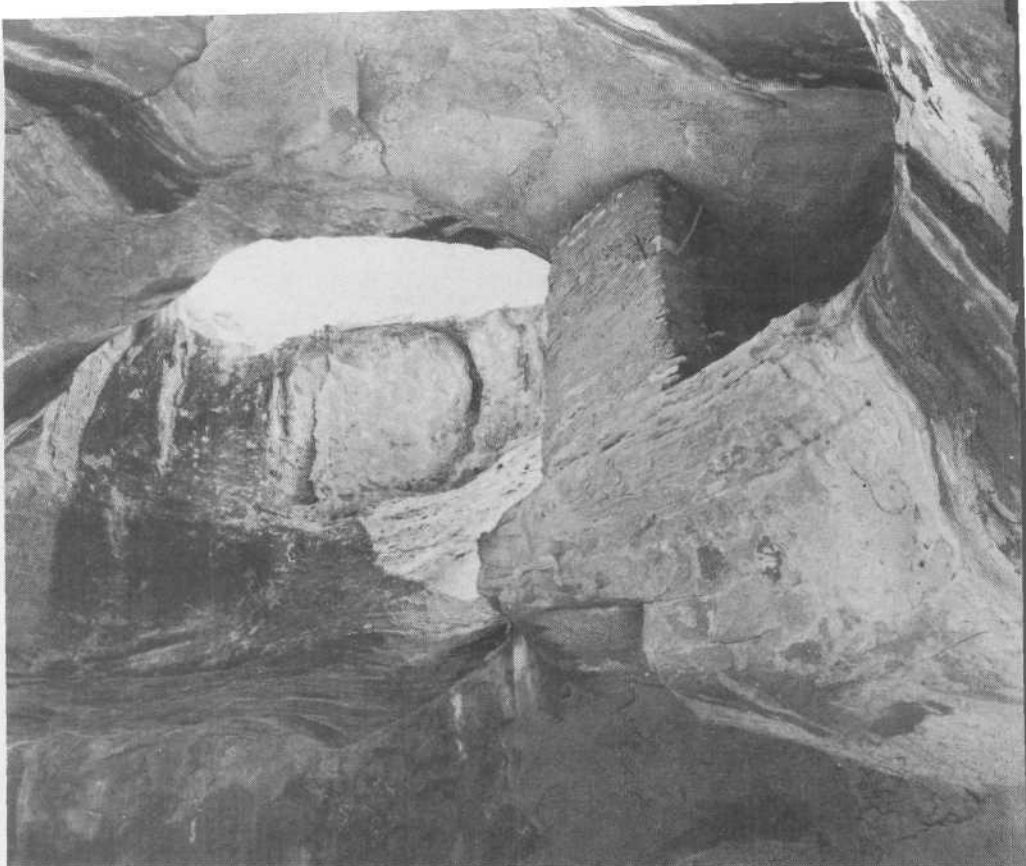
played a minor part. Trees and other plants had sometimes helped, sometimes slowed the process of erosion, had carpeted the mesa tops and canyon floors with hardy species. Native animal life — deer, bison, coyote, fox, badger, rodents and countless other aerial and landbound species — had worked with the plantlife to create soil out of sand, to establish a thin but tough web of life across the semi-arid desertland that dominated the region.

When the race called Anasazi stepped into this dry but lovely desert-canyon paradise it made no great impact, but it did leave a few remnants when it finally retreated. While there, while dwelling in Davis Canyon and others nearby, the Anasazis pursued their peaceful, agrarian ways. They planted small gardens of corn, beans and squash in cleared patches of the sandy canyon bottom. They foraged for pinyon nuts, edible roots and other such local foods, and hunted the deer and desert sheep and smaller game that abounded.

They also built rock homes and food storage structures on the ledges and in the caves of the colorful, eroded sandstone cliffs that wall Davis Canyon, and many of these curious dwellings and structures still stand today, telling silent tales of a stone-age civilization now 700 years extinct.

It takes a four-wheel-drive vehicle, or some easy backpacking, to explore Davis Canyon. The crude vehicle trail that enters the canyon leaves Utah 211 about six miles east of the park boundary in the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. Utah 211 heads west from U.S. 163

These five faces decorate the wall of a large sandstone alcove in Davis Canyon. There are metate-like depressions in the sandstone slabs below the pictographs. Archeologists believe the site to be a shrine.



between Moab and Monticello, Utah.

There is a gate and visitor registration book where the Davis Canyon trail leaves Utah 211. Although the beginning of this trail is outside of the park, there is a sign where the park boundary is crossed. Lower Davis Canyon is not in the park, but the most spectacular part of this nine-mile-long canyon is within Canyon-

lands, and Park Service rangers make periodic patrols for the protection and aid of park visitors, and to check on the many archeological sites there. Both federal and state laws protect such sites from damage, and prohibit the removal of artifacts.

The trail into Davis Canyon wanders across redrock desertland at the base of



dark red sandstone cliffs and the soaring spire of South Sixshooter Peak before dropping into a winding, sandy drywash. It then follows this wash, with only minor detours around seeping springs and rock-strewn narrows, for the rest of its travels up the several main branches of the canyon.

Beyond where the vehicle trail ends in each branching arm of Davis Canyon, hiking is necessary. These hikes reach places of interest that vehicles cannot, and are the highlights of any trip into this lovely canyon complex.

Near the park boundary in Davis Canyon there is a beautiful grove of cottonwood trees. Flowering shrubs, grassy meadows, a trickling stream and looming redrock cliffs nearby make this grove a fine place for camping. Such primitive, informal camping is the only kind available in Davis Canyon.

Exploring from such a camp is a never-ending delight. Dozens of side canyons lure hikers with the promise of graceful arches or Anasazi ruins in lofty alcoves. Some such arches and ruins can be reached by careful climbing, but others must be appreciated from below. Binoculars are a must for exploring Davis Canyon, and photographers will find telephoto lenses quite useful.

There are many arches and ruins in Davis Canyon, but some are special highlights. One arch in a lefthand branching

canyon seems nothing special from the canyon floor, but upon closer examination becomes a rare triple-arch. It requires a steep climb to reach this erosional novelty.

Most of the natural spans in Davis Canyon are modest in size, but make up for this by sheer numbers. One, that seems more bridge than arch, is only a little above the wash bottom near the end of possible vehicle travel. Beside this wash, and near the bridge, is an immense juniper tree. The base of this ancient tree is at least six feet in diameter, making it a giant of its species. Junipers rarely exceed two or three feet in diameter in this region.

There are several archeological highlights in Davis Canyon, but some are difficult to locate. None are marked on the 15 minute topographic map of the area, the Harts Point, Utah, quadrant, so all must simply be hunted. This seeking, however, is part of the thrill and adventure of exploring this remote and beautiful canyon complex.

One such place to look for is a deep, elevated cave-like alcove on a narrow side canyon near the park boundary. Within this alcove a perfectly preserved, square-walled granary stands on a ledge beneath a lovely natural arch. Both arch and rock structure can be glimpsed from the canyon floor in just the right location, and binoculars help study this almost inaccessible natural-human treasure.

Another highlight is a religious shrine within an obscure rock alcove in sight of the main wash. Here, four painted faces stare enigmatically from a smoothed sandstone wall, and a number of metate-like impressions can be found in the rock slabs that stand precariously on a ledge below the pictographs. Archeologists tell us that such shrines played important parts in the lives of both extinct and contemporary Amerind cultures.

A third archeological novelty to look for is on a branching canyon far up Davis. Here, a series of stone structures stand on ledges high above the wash bottom, and the remnants of ground-level granaries can be seen under low ledges. But the curious aspect of this site is a rare log structure that stands among the rock dwellings. Even archeologists are bemused by this unusual artifact. The authenticity of this Anasazi log cabin, however, is beyond question. It is al-

most impossible to reach without special climbing equipment, making one marvel at the effort that went into its construction.

But small pieces of log that have fallen from the elevated ledge furnish proof of the cabin's age and origin. The chopped ends of such pieces were obviously cut with stone axes, not sharp metal edges. Of course it is possible, but unlikely, that the log cabin was built by Indians other than the Anasazis, but archeologists contend that once the Anasazis departed this area, it was only rarely penetrated by later tribes, and then almost exclusively by bands of nomadic Utes bent on hunting or foraging. Early Navajos also entered the general region some 200 years ago, but their wood structures are unique and easily identifiable.

There is one highlight of Davis Canyon, however, that is easily found, and that is its outstanding natural beauty. The canyon walls are red and white layered Cedar Mesa sandstone. Some such walls are still topped with the dark red and brown deposits of younger geologic strata, with these covered by a dense pinyon-juniper forest. Other Cedar Mesa walls are barren, weathered into spires and fins and domes of colorful rock.

The winding, branching, labyrinthine canyon floor is narrow here, broad and set with sage flats there. Big cottonwoods tell of springs or subsurface moisture. Dozens of long or short side canyons angle off in all directions, inviting exploration on foot. Some of these are dry, some have tiny springs or desert streams. Some end soon in gigantic, echoing alcoves of solid slickrock, others seem to wander on forever between close canyon walls.

But whatever your interests, natural beauty, Indian history, arches, wildlife, wilderness hiking, geology, four-wheeling or just random exploring in a remote place that is visited by only a few dozen people each year, Davis Canyon has something unusual to offer. It's a hidden, charmed canyon complex that has taken Mother Nature, with a little help from ancient man, millions of years to create. And modern man has had the wisdom to protect and preserve it within a national park so that we, and those who follow us, may see it and appreciate its unique beauty and novel human history. □

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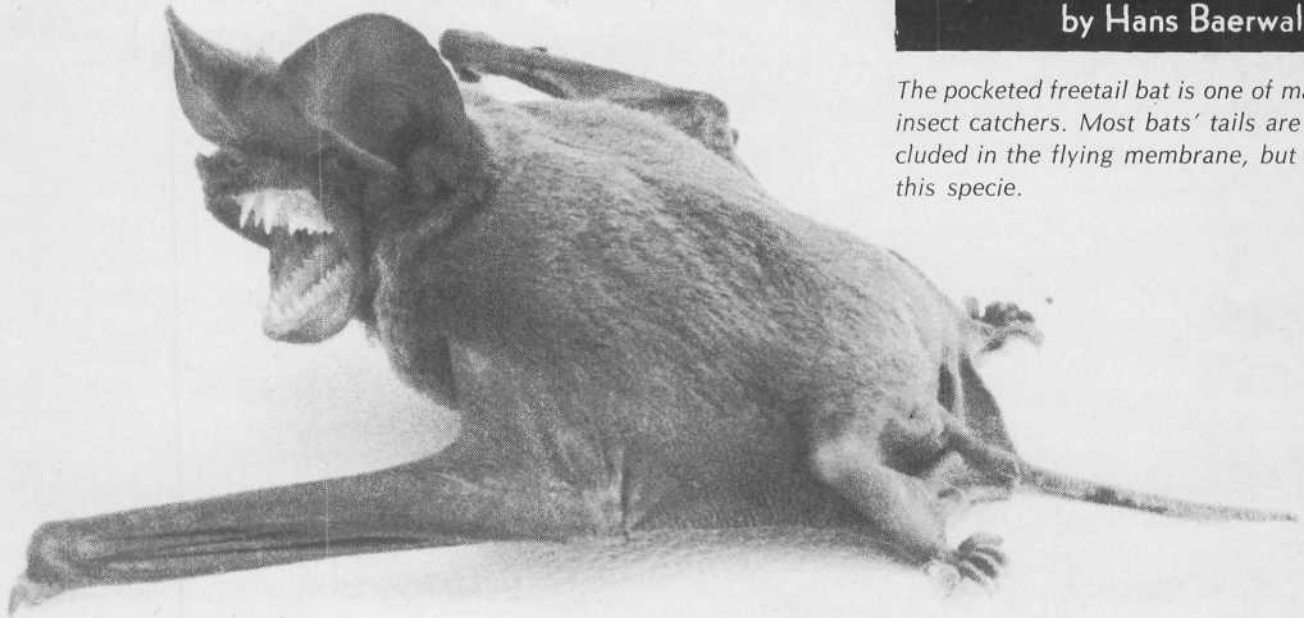
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Desert Life

by Hans Baerwald



The pocketed freetail bat is one of many insect catchers. Most bats' tails are included in the flying membrane, but not this specie.

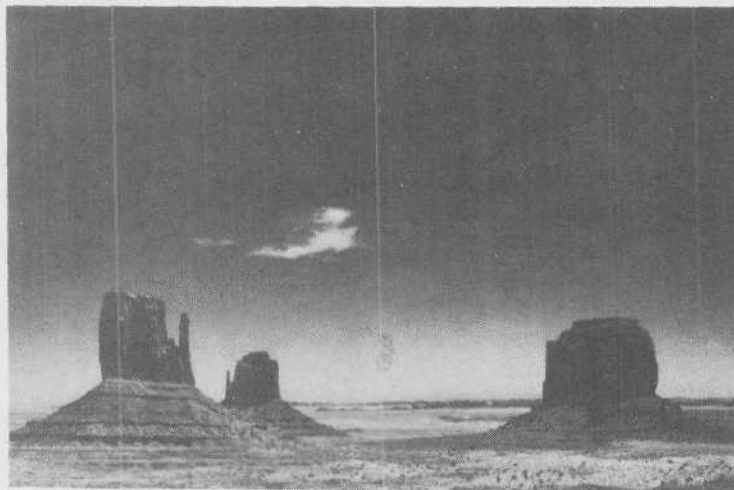


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Oatman, Arizona

LOCATION: Oatman is located 32 miles southwest of Kingman, Arizona, on old Highway 66 (now called Oatman Road).

BRIEF HISTORY: By the year 1851 there was a steady stream of pioneer wagon trains moving west to the gold fields of California. In one such train, moving slowly across the Southwest toward the banks of the Colorado River, was the wagon of Royse Oatman and his family. Before the broad river was seen, the Oatman wagon became separated from the others and the family was attacked by marauding Apache Indians. Oatman and his wife were murdered. Their son was left for dead by the Apaches but was later found alive by a search party. The two Oatman daughters were taken hostage by the Indians. One died in captivity, but the other, Olive Oatman, was kept five years as a hostage before she was ransomed, released and reunited with her brother.

Legend has it that Olive Oatman was held

by the Apaches at what is now called Ollie Oatman Spring, about a half mile from the site of the mining camp. Whether the legend is right or wrong, in 1909 the town of Oatman was named in Olive's honor.

Mining began in the Oatman area in 1863 when Johnny Moss made a gold discovery that is said to have yielded him nearly a quarter of a million dollars. The Moss Mine closed by 1870, but the discovery of a rich ledge at the site of Goldroad, by Jose Jerez in 1900, started mining activity all over again. When Ben Paddock, in 1902, saw gold glittering on the ground some three miles down the canyon from Goldroad another small rush was on. The Vivian Mining Company bought the Paddock claim and the mining camp of Vivian was born.

By 1909, when the name of Vivian was changed to Oatman, the town had stores, saloons, banks, hotels and a population of several hundred. But it took the big gold rush of 1916 to start the real Oatman boom.

1916 was the year that a bonanza gold vein

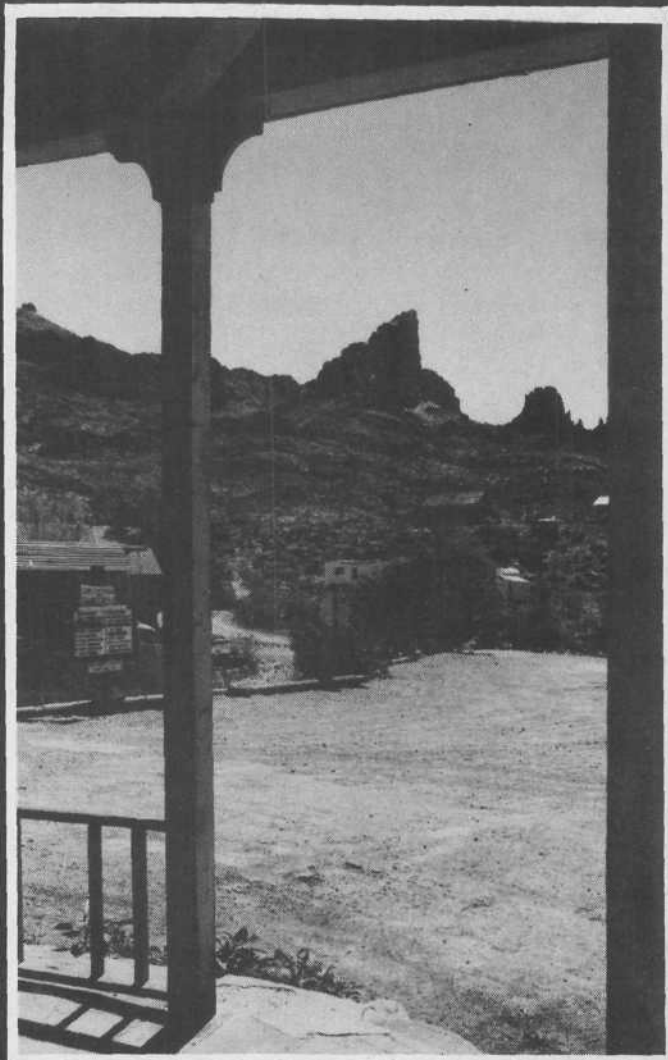


Many buildings dating from Oatman's bonanza years line old Highway 66. The two-story structure illustrated was, at one time or another, a drug store, a card parlor, an Elks Lodge, and a telephone company office. It is now a curio shop.

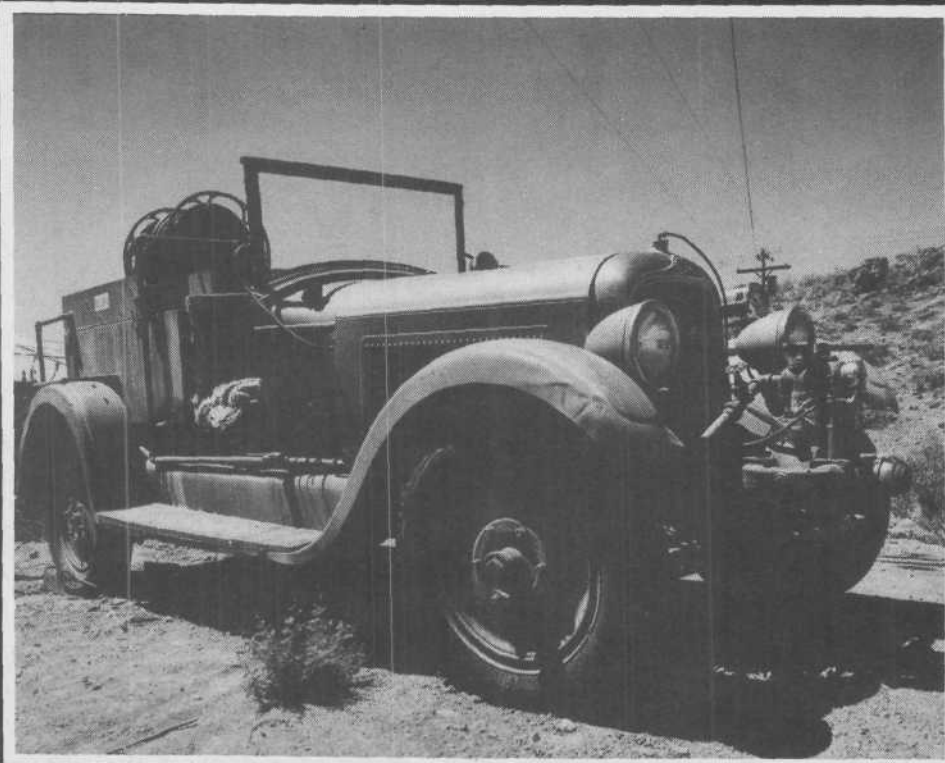
was found on the United Eastern Mining Company property. Ore assayed at better than \$2,000 per ton, and the word of a six million dollar strike was out. Within a year Oatman grew from a sleepy little mining camp with fewer than 500 residents to a bustling gold town with a population of more than 3,500.

Following the big strike Oatman thrived for more than two decades. As the mines prospered the population grew to more than 5,000. The United Eastern produced more than \$14 million in gold, and the Tom Reed, another Oatman property, yielded better than \$13 million. With Goldroad, the Moss Mine, and others, the Oatman area produced more than \$35,000,000 in gold ore before the government ordered the mines closed at the start of World War II.

OATMAN TODAY: To those who traveled old Route 66 over Sitgreaves Pass in the days before the highway route was changed, both the road and Oatman will be a surprise. On the highway, which is poorly maintained today, it is a rarity to see another car. Oatman is just a shell of her former self. Most of the people in Oatman moved away when the mines closed in 1942. Many more moved 10 years later when the highway route was changed. Today there are a few shops, a hotel and 150 people who keep their neat homes among the abandoned buildings and mines of yesteryear. Headframes dot the hills, an ore tramway snakes its way up the mountain and there is modern mining activity. But without the big mines and mills, and without the business brought by highway traffic, the boom days of Oatman seem to be memories of the past. □



Above: The jagged rock promontory called "Elephant's Tooth" stands black in the morning sunlight above the sites of the United Eastern and the Tom Reed mines and mills. These Oatman mines produced more than 27 million dollars worth of gold ore.



Left: Fire was a constant threat to Oatman. A limited water supply, wooden buildings, and a very dry climate combined to make fire a major hazard. This 1917 Studebaker was Oatman's first fire truck. It is now on display on the town's main street.

— Photographs by Howard Neal

Coyote Road

by BETTY SHANNON

YOU WON'T find Coyote Road on your average highway map. Which is good, if you are a solitude-seeker like me. This seldom-traveled twenty-or-so-mile stretch of desert road winds up and over Nevada's Silver Peak Range through some of Esmeralda County's most interesting scenery. And if you are inclined toward some additional exploration, a fork of the road leads to extensive mine workings, a number of which date to before the turn of the century.

Depending on your direction of travel, Coyote Road either begins or ends just south of the revived mining camp of Silverpeak. For us, Silverpeak was at the end.

Seven miles west of Coaldale, we turned off U.S. Highway 6 on to State Route 3A, which is the main route into Fish Lake Valley and the ranching community of Dyer. Less than a mile south of the junction, a dirt road veers off to the left. Although little used nowadays, this was once the main wagon road connecting the borax works at Fish Lake with Columbus, and more importantly, with the one-time center of trade and freighting for this part of Nevada, the now deserted camp of Candelaria. The road closely parallels the edge of Fish Lake, a white-crusted marsh some five or six miles in length.

At the southern tip of Fish Lake Marsh the road forks, the right fork continuing on into Fish Lake Valley. The left fork leads to the Crossing and Coyote Road.

The Crossing, a place name dating back a century to the days of borax min-

Above: Headframe of the main shaft of the Drinkwater Mine, Mineral Ridge. Below: The stone cabin at Cave Spring. Opposite page: Sherry Hoffman, Placerville, California, examines one of many mine shafts on Mineral Ridge.



ing and refining at Fish Lake, is just what its name implies. It is the only place within a distance of several miles in either direction where the muddy marsh and its tributary can be crossed, either by wagon or modern vehicle. Several roads converge at or near the Crossing's primitive wooden bridge, beneath which a brackish stream flows into the marsh.

Alongside the road a scant mile east of the Pacific Borax Company's refining mill and the camp known as Fish Lake or Borax City.

Borax production began at Fish Lake in 1873 when a small company, Mott and Piper, staked out several tracts containing borates. It was reported that in that year Mott and Piper produced two tons of concentrated borax daily.

This activity did not go unnoticed by the Pacific Borax Company, the largest producer of borax at Columbus Marsh some dozen miles to the north. In 1875, the Pacific Borax Company moved its op-

erations to Fish Lake where it built a plant with an even larger refining capacity than its Columbus works. The company continued producing borax from the marsh for almost a decade.

It is difficult to imagine that a settlement of 200 people and 40 buildings ever existed nearby. The dilapidated roof of a small cabin half-buried in the powdery alkali dush, a rusted vat, a scattering of charcoal — that's about all there is to indicate the location of the camp jestingly described by its contemporaries as a fashionable watering place for the elite of Candelaria and Columbus. Columbus' newspaper, *The Borax Miner*, once reported that myriads of gnats were pestering Fish Lake's inhabitants, but apparently little else of newsworthy interest ever occurred at Fish Lake during its brief life.

The road continues along the east side of the marsh, but we retraced our path back to within a few hundred yards of the Crossing to the unmarked junction with

Coyote Road. The road crosses the valley, then follows a broad sandy wash up into the Silver Peak Mountains. The wash gradually narrows to a slim pass through an imposing, nearly vertical wall of rhyolite.

At the pass is Cave Spring, a landmark known even to ancient man. The cave, which provided shelter to this land's first inhabitants, is a huge cavity, well above the level of the road in the south side of the wall. The nearby spring provides a good flow of water which is now piped to a tank in a corral beside the road.

Just beyond the corral a well-built stone cabin nestles against the foot of the wall. Like the cave in centuries past, the cabin has served as a refuge to those who have passed this way in more recent times.

The cabin's door reads like a guest register from an old frontier hotel. Names, dates and comments have been scrawled across its weathered surface creating a fascinating chronicle of people



Traveling through the scenic Silver Peak Range on Coyote Road.

and events. Many of the older signatures have faded, but among those still legible are several typical of the colorful personalities of the old West. One such visitor was a high grade ore buyer who, with a fitting flair, signed in as "Silver \$lim". And some 40 years ago, a female traveler, on what must have been an incredible journey from Tacoma, Washington to Los Angeles, remarked, "What a place!" But my favorite is an unsigned inscription. Though lacking grammatical perfection, it offers a bit of universal advice, "Don't bring nothing when came in — don't take nothing when go."

However, perhaps the cabin's most remarkable feature is outside on its earth-covered roof, where a cholla cactus has taken root and now stands a sturdy three feet tall.

Beyond the pass at Cave Spring the road enters a broad, flat area, a sort of miniature basin rimmed by pinon- and juniper-covered hills. Within the basin a maze of roads and trails fan out from Coyote Road. Most of them, according to our U.S. Geological Survey map, converged at either one or the other of two springs located on the slopes of the basin.

After looking at the map and the terrain, I chose Valcaldo Spring as our prospective campsite for the night. I must admit that I like the euphonic sound of its name, but my decision was also influenced by the scenic, deep green forested slopes that lay ahead in the general di-

rection of the spring's location. I had visions of a veritable oasis awaiting us at the end of the trail, a sparkling fountain gushing forth from the hillside, below it a lush grassy meadow shaded by towering cottonwoods.

Since our map was drawn from an 1898 survey, finding the spring was not as easy as it looked on paper. The first trail we tried started off in the right direction, but after a mile or so it began ascending the nearest mountain side, up and away from the apparent location of the spring. By this time our roadway had changed from a rutted path worn through the sagebrush to a relatively recent dozer trail, which, by a series of switchbacks, continues to climb the steep slope, most likely arriving eventually at a prospect site. Checking the map, we realized that we had lost the old trail at a point where it crossed a broad gully, through which time and weather have obliterated all evidence of the ancient route of travel.

Backtracking to Coyote Road we tried the next trail. Its route through the pinons and east of the gully gradually grew dimmer and dimmer until we lost it, still short of our destination.

On the third attempt everything began to fall into place. The narrow trail hugged the slope of the mountain just as the map's configuration indicated. We crossed a dry gully, then skirted around a brush-covered knoll, and there just ahead, at the foot of a juniper-covered

slope, was a towering cottonwood. Well, to be more accurate, almost towering. The tree, which was growing in a dry stream bed, was not quite as magnificent as I had imagined. In fact, it looked more dead than alive, but nevertheless it was a cottonwood, so the spring had to be nearby.

We stopped, got out of the Jeep, and pushed our way through the brush to a patch of green grass on the slope of several hundred feet above the wash. Valcaldo Spring, my pleasant-sounding, sparkling fountain, turned out to be a stagnant pool at the mouth of a small, dark tunnel. Nearby some planks and rusting pipe indicated that the water hole had been developed at one time.

Although the spring was a disappointment, finding potable water was not a necessity. Our five-gallon container was full. There was a good level campsite at the base of the cottonwood, so we settled down to making camp in this secluded little spot beneath the blue Nevada skies.

In the morning, we retraced our tracks back to Coyote Road. In about a half mile, near the eastern edge of the basin the road forks. Coyote Road crosses a ridge, then drops abruptly into a canyon, and continues on into Silverpeak via the right fork. If you are in a hurry you can make it to Silverpeak in 20 minutes, but you will miss the best part of the trip.

The left fork leads to Mineral Ridge and the site of extensive mining activity, some of it dating back to 1863. In that year gold-bearing ore was discovered and the Red Mountain District, named for the nearly 9,000-foot-high peak which dominates the ridge's landscape, was organized. The following year a three-stamp mill was built there.

At the same time, additional discoveries were made on the ridge a few miles further east the Silver Peak District sprang into existence. In 1865, a 10-stamp mill was brought into the new district from the Reese River area. Meanwhile, some 3,000 feet below, at the base of the Silver Peak Range, a few adobe huts, hurriedly constructed on the edge of Clayton Valley, marked the birth of the town of Silver Peak. (Some years later, the name was reduced to a single word, Silverpeak.)

Both mills and the principal mines of the two districts were acquired by the Great Salt Basin Mining and Milling

Company in 1867. The company more than doubled its refining capacity by erecting a 30-stamp mill at Silverpeak. A gravity tramway delivered the ore, economically and efficiently, from the Mineral Ridge mines, which by now were considered a single district, the Silver Peak and Red Mountain. The ores yielded both gold and silver values, but in 1870 the company suspended all operations, miners and mill workers were discharged, and Silverpeak's future looked dim.

Although the mines of Mineral Ridge were not totally abandoned in the following decades, mining and milling activity was limited and sporadic until 1906. In that year, eastern money revitalized Mineral Ridge. The Pittsburgh Silver Peak Gold Mining Company acquired the Mohawk, Alpine, Silver Peak, Drinkwater and Mary mines. It built a branch line railroad 17½ miles from the Tonopah and Goldfield line. It erected a 100-stamp mill, later expanded by another 20 stamps, making it the largest stamp mill in the silver state. And the company even built a new town, Blair, at the base of the mountains three miles north of Silverpeak.

For the next decade the steadily pounding stamps made the Pittsburgh Silver Peak Company the largest producer of low grade ore in Nevada. More than seven million dollars had been extracted from Mineral Ridge before the company abandoned operations, dismantled its mill, and moved it to California.

Several dozen mine shafts and tunnels pock mark the slopes and canyons of Mineral Ridge. The massive headframe of the Drinkwater Mine is still an impressive structure. There are also a number of frame cabins, weathered to a picturesque golden bronze.

At one time a pair of roads snaked down between steep canyon walls to lead directly from Mineral Ridge to Blair in the valley below. Exploration of several possible routes led us to some magnificent and awesome views of rugged razorback ridges and nearly vertical canyon walls, but otherwise the trails dead ended. We followed one steep and loose-surfaced trail to the edge of the precipitous escarpment. Although a dim road-way continued around the point of the cliff, we decided further travel, even with four-wheel-drive, was too risky.

Perhaps from the site of Blair it would be possible to find a way up one of the canyons to Mineral Ridge, but from the top it seemed more prudent to take the easy route and return to Coyote Road to continue our journey to Silverpeak.

To some, Coyote Road is a route of convenience, a short-cut from Fish Lake Valley to Silverpeak. To me, Coyote Road is a scenic journey across the Silver Peak Mountains, an adventure to be taken at leisure and enjoyed. □

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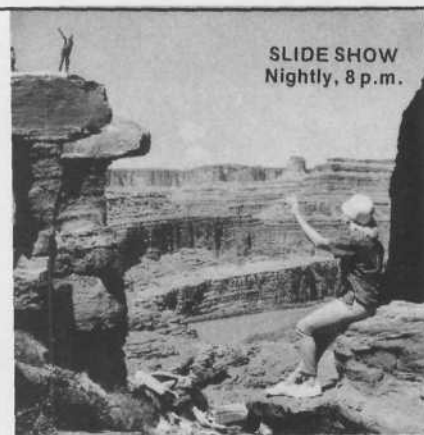
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IT'S A LOT like walking through a door into a new and different world. The change is that dramatic—that complete. The world used by man appears to stop at the water's edge — and a primitive land begins; a land still dominated by nature.

This is the lower Colorado River; a semi-isolated stretch of confusion. Here, it seems, Mother Nature had some trouble making up her mind. The jagged peaks in the background are definitely desert; but at water's edge there is a mixture of nature ranging from the playful little river otters to the dignified egrets. Beavers beat the ground with their tails and coyotes are apt to break into song at the door of your tent.

I'll never forget my first trip to the lower Colorado River. If blame is due, it goes to Charles and Joyce White and Don Hamilton, all residents of Palm Desert, California. We arrived at Walter's Camp, about 40-miles south of Blythe, California, late on a Friday evening and launched two boats. It was a fantastically beautiful evening. The moon was generous. It rippled across the water and bounced lightly against the tangled tamarisk and tules that bordered the river.

A TRIP IN

It's like walking through that door I mentioned earlier. The mood was demanding. It left little room for memories of something back down the road. It was quiet, peaceful and caressing to the mind.

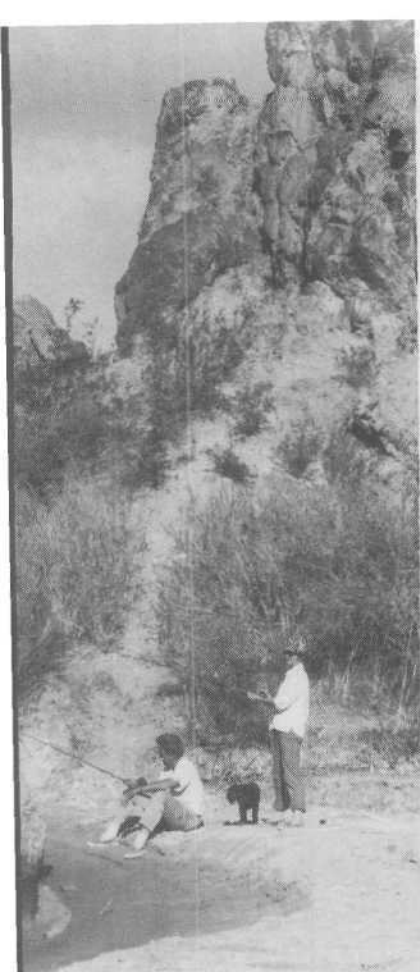
Thirty minutes later, both boats were hung up on a sand bar; not intentionally, I assure you. This is one of the hazards of playing on the southern stretch of the Colorado River. There are sand bars — and they move with the frequency of an oscillating electrical current. Just about the time a person begins to think he is acquainted with the river, a sand bar moves over to snag his boat — just to prove that the river is still boss.

This hazard is confined to dignity alone. I have never heard of anyone being injured — unless punctured pride can be considered an injury. But it is interesting to note that while it is easy to run upon a sandbar, it's equally easy to get off — most of the time.

That first night with the Whites and Hamilton, we camped in what must be termed the most secluded camp spot I have ever seen. We gained entry to this choice spot through a narrow stream that drifted through the tules into the river. This little clearing was sheltered from the river — and everything else — by thickly-growing tamarisk trees. It was the ideal spot — but since that first trip, I have learned that there are numerous such spots along this lower stretch of the river. Most of them rarely used.

I'll not bore you with the details of setting up camp. What happened the next day is a lot more interesting. Early the next morning, Charlie, Don and I started beating a path through the tules. Joyce stayed in camp with my wife, Lola. All I knew at the time was that we were going to some place called Draper Lake. It was "back that-a-way."

We plowed across a beaver dam, sank to our waist in murky water and stum-



excellent fishing—and areas to park campers.

TO TIME

CAMPING ON THE LOWER COLORADO

by AL PEARCE

bled in, around and over what seemed to be a couple of million tules. Then, I saw Draper Lake for the first time. It would have been worth twice the effort. This is what the world must have been like before the coming of man.

Draper Lake is about twice, to three-times the size of a football field. At its deepest point, it is hardly more than three feet. It could be called a back-water slough. Scores of dying, or dead cottonwood trees stretch their gangly arms towards heaven — and upon their branches, there were perched numerous egrets and snowy-white cranes.

Like the river, the banks are lined with tules and tamarisk trees. But just beyond, like the backdrop to a stage of imagination, weather-beaten desert peaks form a world of pseudo-reality.

I had questioned the sanity of these two men I was with for even trying to beat their way through the tules. It oc-

curred to me on the way in that nothing could be worth the beating we had taken getting here.

But I had been wrong. Draper Lake is one of the most fascinating places I have ever seen.

Like I said, it's difficult to get there. Between the Colorado River and Draper Lake, there are about 200 yards of solid tules. And, beneath these tules, there is from two to three feet of muck and water. But if you are interested in seeing one of the most fascinating, one of the most primitive sites in Southern California, it can be found here.

However, if you are not inclined to go beating through the tules, the river itself is still primitive. There are a few boats running back and forth; there are quite a few canoes going downstream; but despite this presence of man, there remains a feeling of being all alone.

And talking for a moment about canoeing . . .

This is a great area for the beginning canoeist, or the accomplished canoeist, for that matter. The river flows slowly, there is no white water and the scenery is uniquely beautiful.

And, it's easy. The current does all the work. The canoe occupants need only stick a paddle overboard now and then to keep the canoe straight.

It's easy because canoes can be rented at Walter's Camp and floated downstream to Picacho State Park. There, the canoeist and the canoes are picked up and driven back to Walter's Camp.

This area is popular for canoeing. The Parks Department of the County of Riverside is now attempting to plot a canoe trail down this section of the river. Camping is restricted in the wildlife refuge that runs along the shores of the river, but a multiple choice of camping spots can be found above the refuge.

But back to that first trip to the river with the Whites and Hamilton.

After a morning at Draper Lake, we cruised downstream for a look at the rest of the lower Colorado River. It's fascinating from a scenic point of view — and interesting to the observer of nature. The river is heavily bordered by vegetation, some of which I am not even remotely familiar with. Mostly, however, the banks are lined with tamarisk, tules, and tall, bending arrowweed.

Here and there along the river, are numerous trails which leave the water and wind through heavy brush to the foothills. Some of these trails lead to backwater lakes, others are game trails, following routes which are literally untouched by man.

The first real evidence of civilization below Walter's Camp is the Picacho State Park. This is one of the few sections of the river that can be reached by vehicle. And, as a rule, there are several campers in the area. Picacho can be reached off State Highway S78. This entire area is well known to Southern California campers. It's a popular rock-hounding area and also harbors several of the few old gold mines found in Southern California.

Below Picacho, the river once again



Joyce, left, and Lola prepare an evening meal in the open.

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takes on the primitive appearance. The green vegetation border of the river is backdropped by barren, rocky peaks which give the impression of having been there forever.

On that first trip downriver with the Whites and Hamilton, we made frequent stops to investigate the scores of trails that lead away from the river. On several such trails we saw evidence of wild burros and bighorn sheep, but were not fortunate enough to actually catch a glimpse of these rarely seen animals.

The river winds and turns, seemingly controlled by some unknown force that determines when and how the sand bars will change. Experienced rivermen, such as Charlie White, have little trouble following the deeper water at relatively high speeds; but fast cruising is not recommended for the novice. Here is where the patient canoeist has the advantage. His craft will go anywhere, making all banks accessible.

The canoe can wiggle in and out of shallow waters where even the smallest power boat will get stuck. And, by the way, fishing is a lot better from a canoe. Just drag a line and hook behind the canoe. I've seen canoers pull up strings of fish in this area as long as your leg.

After a long stretch of isolation below Picacho, the signs of civilization begin to thicken. The river is approaching Imperial Dam. There are several marinas in this area. The Imperial Dam is open to the public and if you have never toured a dam, or don't really understand why some — and I repeat that "SOME" dams are necessary, here is the place to find out.

A number of years ago, I wrote an article for *Desert Magazine* about how many retirees buy travel trailers and campers and set out to see the world. Sometimes their money goes faster than they do and they seek a comfortable place to rest a few weeks and let their funds build up.

The area around Imperial Dam — on the Arizona side of the river in particular — is such a place. During the cooler winter months, scores of retired persons gather here. And there is a reason for it. There is a lot to do in this area — and it's all inexpensive.

Just before reaching Imperial Dam — if you are traveling down river, there are several lakes that back off the river. These lakes, unlike the more secluded backwater lakes upstream, have wide openings onto the river. The lakes are

excellent fishing areas. They are filled with bass, panfish and catfish.

Not far above the dam, there is Senator's Wash, which is actually an overflow channel from Squaw Lake. This is one of the biggest lakes below Lake Havasu. There are numerous campgrounds around this lake and the fishing is usually fairly good.

That night, back in camp, I asked the Whites about their experiences on the lower Colorado River. They and Hamilton had been coming here for years.

We had a campfire burning and the moon — at its fullest — created an atmosphere of peace and contentment.

"Why here?" I asked, wondering if they found the same contentment I had discovered.

"It's quiet," Charlie said. "And it's about the only place left in Southern California where you can still get away by yourself."

Joyce said, "We used to go anywhere on the desert, and it was quiet like this. There was never anyone around."

This first trip with the Whites led to others. I have spent a lot of time on the river since then, and it hasn't changed much. There are a few more people now — I've even seen a couple beating their way into Draper Lake.

But the amazing thing about this river is there is always something else. Every trip has revealed new secrets. About nine miles south of Walter's Camp, there is a huge, solid rock cliff around which the river bends. The cliff is about 100 feet high. Just below the cliff, there is a tiny beach, about 20 feet long. Next to the cliff wall, over the beach, there is an opening that permits passage — easy passage, into a stand of ironwood trees. A trail leads to the top of the cliff where there is an excellent view of the river, both upstream and downstream.

And, there is something else. The trail also leads around the base of the cliff to an old rock house. And no one I have ever met knows how the rock house came to be there. It could have been an old miner's cabin — or maybe just a home for someone who loved the river many years ago.

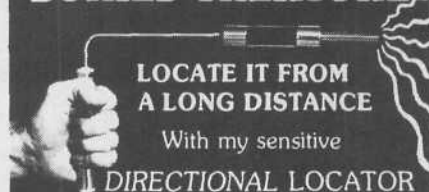
I haven't talked much about the river above Walter's Camp towards Blythe because, frankly, there isn't much to talk about. The Corps of Army Engineers came through here a few years ago with what it called a "chanelization project."

That part of the river hasn't been the same since.

But the lower river remains unchanged. It's a lot like it must have been when Major John Powell first went upstream more than 100 years ago. The water is less turbulent, of course, but that touch of primitiveness that keeps man attached to his umbilical cord is still there.

Somehow, man, nature, and wildlife have managed to mix here. □

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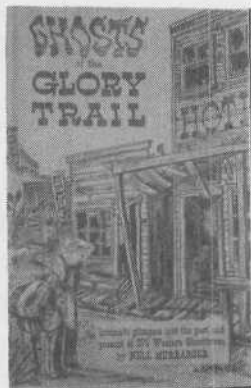


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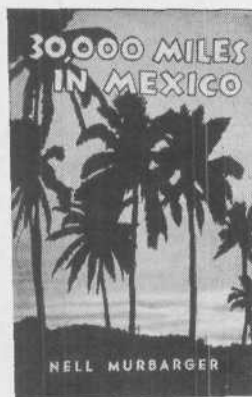
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Calendar of Events

MAY 3 & 4, Delver's Gem and Mineral Society's 25 annual Gem Show; New date and Place: Cerritos College, 11110 E. Alondra Ave., Norwalk, Calif. Free parking and admission. Food. Dealers filled.

MAY 3 & 4, The Antelope Valley Branch of the American Cancer Society's Treasure Show and Metal Detector Contest, Antelope Valley Dragway, Palmdale, Calif. Metal detector contests, displays and demonstrations. Free admission. \$1.00 donation for overnight parking and camping.

MAY 3 & 4, Hi Vista Improvement Association's 43rd annual Desert Wildflower Festival. For information write to 19809 E. Ave. G, Lancaster, Calif. 93534.

MAY 3 & 4, 10th Annual Antique Bottle Show & Sale sponsored by the San Diego Antique Bottle Club, Scottish Rite Memorial Center, Interstate 8, Mission Valley, Calif. Information: Ed McCann, 3970 Kansas, San Diego, Calif. 92104.

MAY 9-11, Gem and Mineral Show sponsored by the Mineralogical Society of Utah, National Guard Armory, 5189 So. State St., Murray, Utah. Free parking. Space for campers.

MAY 10 & 11, 16th Annual Anaheim Searchers "Gem Roundup," Retail Clerks Union Auditorium, 8550 Stanton Ave., Buena Park, Calif. (Near Knotts Berry Farm.) Free admission and parking, dealers, demonstrations, swap table. Show Chairman: Jim Erhart.

MAY 10-26, Julian Woman's Club's 49th Annual Wildflower Show, Community Hall, Washington and Main Sts., Julian, Calif. Admission free.

MAY 16-18, Grub Gulch 3rd Annual Invitational Art Show. Juried. Cash Awards. Booths. No commission on sales. Write for Prospectus. Yosemite Western Artists, P. O. Box 838, Oakhurst, Calif. 93644.

MAY 17 & 18, San Jose Antique Bottle Show & Sale, Oakridge Mall, San Jose, California. Chairman: Gordon Smith, P. O. Box 5432, San Jose, Calif. 95150.

MAY 17, Second Annual Arts & Crafts Festival presented by the Archaeological Survey Association, 1251 Palomares Avenue, La Verne, Calif. Admission free. Information: Lucille Redtfeldt, P. O. Box 516, La Verne, California 91750.

MAY 18, 26th Annual "Leatherama," Sociedad Espanol Hall, 113 South 22nd St., Montebello, Calif., sponsored by the Leathercraft Guild, this is California's only leather show. Craftspeople, plus a contest and a collection of over 30 original pictures, all hand carved. Silent auction. Friendly atmosphere for the whole family. Admission free.

MAY 24-26, Annual Darwin Days Celebration, sponsored by the community of Darwin, California. Old time mining days fun and activity. Flapjack breakfasts and parade. Plenty of free camping.

JUNE 10-12, Rocky Mountain Federation Show & Convention, Convention Hall of the Salt Palace, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hosts, Mineralogical Society of Utah, Wasatch Gem Society. Door prizes, dealers.

JUNE 21 & 22, Lassen Rock & Mineral Society's Third Annual Show, Lassen County Fairgrounds, Susanville, California. Dealer spaces. Camping and tailgating available. Chairman: Clyde Merton, 70 Foss St., Susanville, Calif. 96130.

JUNE 28-JULY 6, Prineville Rockhounds Pow Wow. Crook County Fairgrounds. For information: Prineville Rockhounds Pow Wow Assn., P. O. Box 671, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

JUNE 28 & 29, Mt. Jura Gem & Mineral Society's 11th Annual Rock Show and first time tailgating. Plumas County Fairgrounds, Quincy, California. Field trip Sunday, demonstrations, camping. Chairman: Sherman Anderson, P. O. Box 36, Crescent Mills, California 95934.

JUNE 28-JULY 5, All Rockhounds Pow Wow Club of America, Madras, Oregon. Fourth of July Pow Wow, Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Dealers, displays, field trips. For information: Wm. C. Walther, 3724 W. Soundview Dr., Tacoma, Washington 98466.

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Desert Plant Life

by JIM CORNETT

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BURROBUSH derives its name from the animal which often eats it, the wild burro. These four-footed herbivores seem to prefer this perennial to most other forage plants.

Found nearly everywhere in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, the burrobush is the second most common shrub, next to the familiar creosote bush. It has leaves throughout a good portion of the year, providing food for bighorn sheep as well as burros.

During late spring this xerophyte produces hundreds of spine-covered seeds that easily attach to clothing, skin or fur. A seed, so attached, is given a free ride to a new location where it may drop off and germinate. Bare feet are easily punctured by these spines, but since they are not hooked, are easily removed.

Ambrosia dumosa, its botanical name, is a member of the Sunflower family. There are two types of flower on each plant: male and female. This facilitates the mixing of genes which enhances the adaptability and thus the survival of the plant species.

Desert residents should have no difficulty in growing these woody shrubs in their yard. They require no maintenance, forming a perfectly round bush. You'll want to plant this perennial on the leeward side of your lot so that the spiny seeds produced each spring will blow out of the yard.

Known also as burro-weed or bur-sage, *Ambrosia dumosa* is normally found in association with the creosote bush on well-drained soils below 3,800 feet. The ash-blue leaves, white stems and rounded appearance readily identify this plant for the novice.

The burrobush is extremely bitter to the taste and probably for that reason has never been used as a food source by man.

The tiny flowers can be found throughout much of the year as these plants bloom twice annually. Most flowering occurs in spring but a significant number of plants will also bloom each fall. Unfortunately, the flowers are inconspicuous and so do little to liven up the drab fall landscape. □

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Rambling on Rocks

by
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GALENA: New number 3 in hardness

CALCITE, LONG KNOWN as hardness indicator number 3, has been replaced by galena on the new Mohs scale. Galena is lead sulfide (PbS to the chemist), very heavy, having a specific gravity of 7.5 (7½ times heavier than water).

Last month we discussed halite as the number 2 hardness indicator. Much of what we said for halite can be true for galena. Both are members of the crystal system based on the cube, and both have a cleavage that is parallel to the cube faces. Again we have the situation where a scratch across any face will offer almost exactly the same resistance as that of any other face.

Obviously, however, the two do not greatly resemble each other. Halite has a much lower specific gravity. Galena is

grey to nearly black and is always opaque. Halite is often clear, and usually white.

The most important use for galena is as a source of lead. In most mines with any potential for producing lead, the major ore is galena. Other lead minerals usually are found with galena, but it is rare that any of them is considered as an important lead source.

Galena is a widespread mineral, found at least in small quantities in virtually all portions of the world. It formed in deep-seated ore bodies by the lead combining with sulfur, which is always present in any deep heated portion of the earth. Sulfur is also present in heat at or near the surface of the earth, but here it usually escapes as a gas. It often combines with hydrogen to produce hydrogen sulfide, which gives the very peculiar rotten-egg odor commonly found at hot springs or other warm vents in the earth's surface.

Galena is not the only mineral that appears as a sulfide under these conditions deep within the earth. Most other metals appear as a sulfide, and thus are also good ores. Sphalerite, zinc sulfide, is another common one, and often the two are intimately mixed in an ore body.

The deep-seated deposits of sulfide ores are later exposed by erosion carrying away the overburden of rock. During the erosion process, water and other chemicals reach the ore body long before the galena is exposed. These chemicals enter into reactions with the galena, and form other lead minerals. In spite of the fact that chemicals can alter the galena, the combination of lead and sulfur is stable under most conditions, and at the usual temperatures. Galena is not stable at higher temperatures, with the sulfur escaping as gas. Thus the metal refiner needs only to roast the ore, driving off the sulfur, leaving a puddle of pure lead.

The intimate mixture of galena and sphalerite is usually a problem to the refiner of the ore, and until recently it was a major one. Today, they are separated by a flotation process. Certain chemicals will cause a froth in a water mixture. If the ore is ground into a very fine powder, this froth has the tendency to pick up particles of a certain weight, and carry them upward where they can be skimmed off. As sphalerite, as well as other minerals, have a specific gravity different from galena, (usually lower) it



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is a fairly simple matter to pick off the lighter ones first, then separate the heavier ones.

A visit to an ore mill where they are separating these ores is very interesting. It is quite surprising, when one realizes the high specific gravity of galena, to see fine particles of it floating on a frothy tank, and being skimmed off into another tank. The skimmings are exceptionally pure materials.

The best American deposits of galena are in an area known as the Tri-State Region. This is the meeting of the corners of Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. Here are found excellent crystals of galena along with good crystals of sphalerite and other minerals. The output of these mines is of great interest to the mineral collector as well as the miner.

Excellent deposits of galena have been found in our deserts also. Many of these were small, but one figured in the early history of our Southwest.

During the Civil War, a contingent of soldiers was encamped a few miles north of the present site of Yuma, Arizona. During the wanderings of some of the soldiers, good samples of galena were found at the base of a mountain now known as Castledome Peak.

The history of these mines was told to us by Ed Fries, a caretaker at the largest mine, the Rialto. He stated that the original claim was made by an army officer, but he was quite certain (as these interesting characters always are) that none of the officers ventured far from camp. Thus, in his mind, the ore was found by an enlisted man, and simply taken over by an officer at a later date, when the war was over.

The Castledome mines were worked for many years, but now are idle. Lead was the most important metal recovered, with most of it going into paint. The Rialto Mine was owned and worked by a paint company that had extensive holdings in the Tri-State Region.

Some of the associated minerals at Castledome are worthy of note. The veins contained much fluorite. This is the number 4 hardness indicator that we discussed in our August 1974 column. It is still the number 4 hardness indicator in the new scale.

We have had the privilege of seeing and collecting excellent cubes of fluorite at this locality. Some are green, others

purple. Each original color tends to fade after being placed on the mine dump. The older dumps are covered with almost colorless fluorite. Those of more recent age show pinkish pieces, which would later fade to colorless. Digging in either aged dumps will reveal deeper colored pieces below the surface, away from the bleaching action of the sun.

There are many famous localities for galena in Europe, Africa and South America. Probably the most unique one we know of is in Australia. This deposit is located in the east-central part of the sub-continent, at a place known as Broken Hill. The two principal ores here are galena and sphalerite, as is usual. It is here that we saw the froth separation of the two minerals. To the mineral collector, again the associated minerals are of interest.

This is one of the few places in the world that produces gem clear crystals of the mineral rhodonite. Most mineral collectors know rhodonite as a massive material with a fine pink color. In this form, it is a good material for cutting cabochon gems, carvings and even bowls. At Broken Hill, little, if any, of the massive material is found. Instead, the galena is sometimes filled with excellent crystals. There is no finer gem than a deep pink, flawless rhodonite. Cutting such a gem is a problem, however, as the material cleaves readily, even though fairly hard.

One of the most interesting uses of galena was in the "crystal set" of the early days of radio. This mineral has the property of altering an electrical current from the very high frequencies needed for broadcasting, to that which would be usable by the old-fashioned earphones, and thus heard by the human ear.

Those of the age where they used the "cat's-whisker" crystal set (that certainly dates us) and remembers the

small pellet of silvery material, locked in a small amount of lead, should know that this pellet was galena. These "crystals" ceased to function after a period of time. This was not due to failure of the properties of galena, but rather to a coating of dust or other material that would not transmit the electrical current.

Galena, therefore, has a place in memorabilia. ☐

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Letters to the Editor

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Mr. Pegleg Writes . . .

In view of the incidents wherein the mail department purloined my letters including some of the black nuggets in 1969, 70, 71, 72 etc., I'm now wondering if you received my letter and photos mailed last November, about the 16th or 17th.

Or, maybe you feel there is no further interest in the pegleg black gold. If so, please indicate in some way on the letters to the editor page.

THE MAN WHO FOUND PEGLEG'S BLACK GOLD,

Editor's Note: The letter was received, but the tone was so different it created a credibility gap. Please send a carbon copy of previous correspondence or some other means of identification. I can only handle one "Mr. Pegleg."

More on the Bones . . .

F. A. Barnes' most interesting article regarding the discovery of human bones in one hundred million year old rock in that gorgeous state of Utah did not conclude as a mystery to me. In my opinion the article is but another indication that 19th century scientists made serious blunders in their attempts to determine biological and geological histories on this planet. Barnes' article involuntarily contributes data to widen the unpublicized rift that exists between scientists who support the theory of evolution of life and those scientists who insist upon initial creation.

As a professional geologist with 25 years of education and experience I have personally run the gamut concerning belief in the origin of *Homo sapiens* (thinking man) and the origin of his home, Planet Earth. Early in my career I was taught and I accepted on faith that geological formations were millions to billions of years old. I was taught and I accepted the belief that *Homo sapiens* evolved a mere few thousand years ago from some ape-like creature. Lately, I have abandoned all pro-evolution beliefs in favor of a young earth and the creation of life forms by a supreme being. My researches have revealed that the latest scientific discoveries favor creation and not evolution.

Barnes' article questions why the University of Utah did not date the human bones. In my opinion there is a very simple answer to that question. The date would have been em-

barassing to the University's geologists and anthropologists. Bones are dated using the Carbon-14 Method. Carbon-14 would have indicated that the human bones were merely a few thousand years old at the most. Such a young age would have contrasted with the accepted "scientific" age of the Dakota (or Morrison) Formation which is one hundred million years, give or take twenty million to thirty million years. Therefore, which age would be correct? Would it be the young age discovered by modern techniques (Carbon-14)? Or would it be the older age which was conceived by 19th century (sometimes biblically hostile) geologists?

Desert Magazine continues to be one of my favorite magazines. The magazine is primarily responsible for my having chosen geology as a profession. As a youth in Massachusetts prior to World War II, I subscribed to Randall Henderson's early editions and became so enamored with the West that I came west to stay. That love of the West has never diminished.

WILLIAM WAISGERBER,
Sepulveda, California.

In the February, 1975 issue of *Desert* you carried an excellent article called "The Case of the Bones in Stone." Being an amateur archeologist, I became deeply involved with this particular story of the human bones found in Utah.

The article stated the bones were encased in rock that was several hundred million years old. The fact that these bones are not the anthropoid type of bones that were discovered by Dr. Leaky throws his theory out of the window. I would still like to know why these particular bones were not carbon-dated for age. I feel that some anthropologists are afraid to admit that man was created, not evolved from sub-human creatures like Leaky tried to declare.

Until we have these bones carbon-dated, I'm sure many decent God believing people will never be satisfied.

FRANK BODNAR,
South Gate, California.

Of Tonopah & Tidewater . . .

In the current issue of *Desert Magazine* in "Letters to the Editor," Mr. Bishop requested more history regarding the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad. We would also like to make the same request. During the last several years we have devoted many hours walking along the old roadbed—covering much of the distance between Baker and Te-copa.

We are old subscribers to the *Desert Magazine*, having saved the complete collection and would like to add our names to your long list of happy readers.

W. D. and B. A. Knight,
Santa Ana, California.

Editor's Note: Our November issue will carry an article including the old Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad. If you just can't wait until November, see the following letter.

As to George Bishop's letter in the April issue asking for information about the history of the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, he can read all about it in the book, "Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California Volume II" by David F. Myrik. He can read it in any library or purchase same.

I also have enjoyed reading *Desert Magazine* for years and made many trips to ghost towns, etc. I might say Mary Frances Strong's trip articles are tops and would suggest she mention the time of the year she makes her trips.

ALFRED J. ROSE,
Vallejo, California.

Hooked on Desert . . .

I have been subscribing to your magazine going on three years, and before that I bought it at the book store for about three years. I guess that just about sums it up how I feel about *Desert Magazine*.

I like to read about places in it, then go see as many as possible on my vacation. When will you have a story on Oatman, Arizona?

WARREN C. THOMAS,
Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Editor's Note: Oatman, Arizona is featured in this month's Desert Ghosts series.

26-Year-Old Winner . . .

"The Biggest Liar of Them All" in the March issue of *Desert* brought back some memories. This is a copy of the winning "Lie" which my brother, Roy Hicks, wrote for the 1949 Liars Contest.

RALPH S. HICKS,
Manhattan, Kansas.

THE CURSE OF PEGLEG SMITH

Roy J. Hicks ("Rimrock Red")

Brief my respite, then back to my doom;
But now from the mists, the murk and
the gloom,
Up from the dismal dark shrouds of the tomb,
I come to your campfire my place to assume.

Long, long did I tramp o'er this desert's
wide wastes;
Its dangers and perils how oft' have I faced;
Its canyons I followed, its ledges I traced,
Known hunger and thirst and despair's
bitter taste.

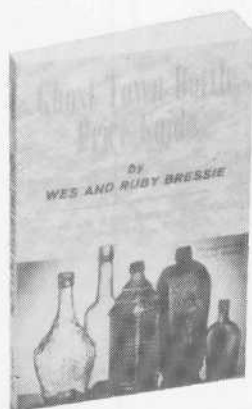
Tonight I have come from the grave's
narrow cell,
But your fate and your fortune I may
not foretell;
Or who in the search for my gold shall excel,
My gold that was black as the cinders of hell;
Enmeshed and enthralled by its
magical spell,
Ye here on the desert forever shall dwell.
Its curse I bequeath you. Forever, farewell.

Black gold of the desert? Truth, legend
or myth?

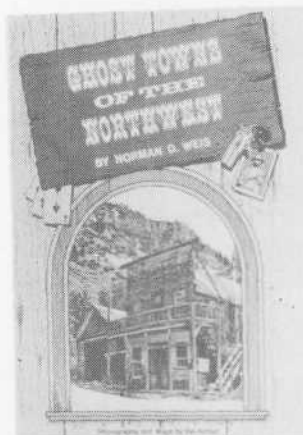
Oh! That is my secret—me, old Pegleg Smith.

GREAT READING From CAXTON PRINTERS

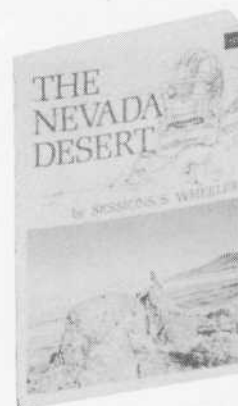
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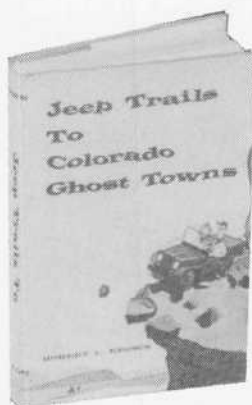
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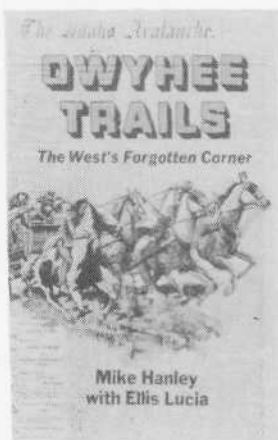
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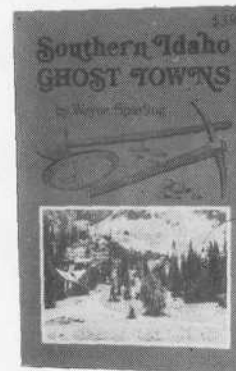
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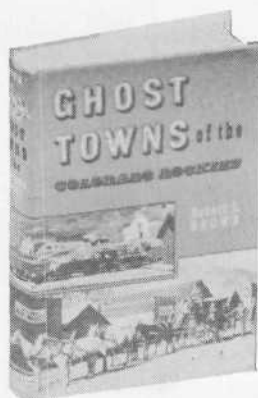
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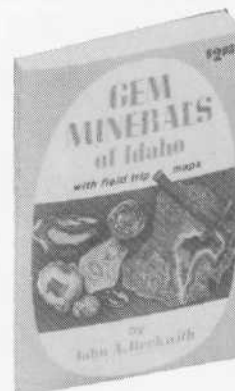
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